



# Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

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JAN  
 2022

# THE HOMESTEAD

We are blessed to have Bishop Stephen Chow, SJ, the new Bishop of Hong Kong, celebrate Epiphany Mass in OLMC and kick start 2022 for our parishioners!



**Bishop Stephen Chow**

"As bishop, it is my desire to be a bridge between the government authorities and the Church and Hong Kong, between Catholics, Christians of other denominations and other religions. I am aware that this will not be an easy task but the pandemic has taught us that helping one another, regardless of religious and political positions, is the way forward..."



**Bishop Chow with the Holy Family Choir**

# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## Pastoral

### We saw his STAR at its rising.... (Mt 2:2)

*Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM*

Our Parish community of OLMC received a special visit during the celebration of our Lord's Epiphany on January 2, 2022. We were graced with the presence of the new Bishop of Hong Kong, Most Rev. Stephen Chow, as presider at the 10:00 am and 11.45 am Masses of that day. In the early afternoon, through the invitation of Fr. Thomas Law and the Parish Council, some of us had the chance to dialogue with the Bishop over a range of issues in our church and society.

Personally, it was a joy for me to listen to Bishop Chow as he reminded us of our special calling: the vocation not only to "follow the star" as the Magi did (cf 2:1-12) but to be "small stars" in our own way, leading others to Jesus, the Great and Authentic Star, the Light of the World. In other words, he encouraged us to continue to be evangelized and to be evangelizers in our humble way, at every opportunity presented to us.

This is indeed a big challenge as we start the New Year 2022 still laden with anxiety due to the two-year old pandemic, which the whole world is living through. Now, more than ever, we all need to strongly support each other in "passing through" this perilous and uncertain times. But even as we do that, we cannot lessen the enthusiasm in communicating the Gospel joy.

Even as we allow the Lord to cover us and conquer our fearful hearts with the power of his love, we also pray that he may increase our love and compassion for our sisters and brothers especially for those who are suffering severely due to this pandemic and the complications it brings. We pray that the Lord may give us listening hearts that know how to speak a word of consolation to the weary and over-burdened. For we are all deeply connected, created in the one image of God; this is the great truth that the mystery of God's Incarnation in Jesus our Lord has brought to bear on us in this Christmas season.



Sr. Victoria & Choir

On behalf of our Parish Priest, Fr. Law, I would like to thank all those who continue to commit themselves to the growth of our Parish community by generously sharing their time, talent and treasure. Let me also welcome the new 'evangelizers' who will hopefully join our community, especially among the young people. As Bishop Chow says, we need to give importance to "communion" not only with those who are already in the Church but most especially with those who are in the margins. We all need to journey together, in synodality, guided by the Star of Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord, Master and Shepherd!

May Mary, the Mother of God, Our Lady of Mount Carmel here in 1 Star Street, accompany us in this pilgrimage of life. Amen.



Readers



Eucharistic Ministers



Hospitality (UCG)



Other Mass Servers

# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## Music Ministry



*Riza Suarez Maningo Bucao is a member of the Bethany Choir*

As a first-time member of a choir group (OLMC's Bethany Choir), my greatest motivation in life is to serve God through His gift of talent. In my case, this is through singing.

I joined the Bethany Choir Group through my good friend's encouragement and endorsement, who also happens to be a Bethany Choir member. When I joined the choir, my choirmates have good voices on an individual level, however, we lacked the proper singing technique to blend our voices and sing as one during mass service. We revisited our YouTube recordings and noticed improper vocal placement, absence of resonance, and unclear lyrics pronunciation.

Clearly, there are a number of things we had to work on as a group and as they say, "Learning is an active process". We've been blessed that we have new joiners who shared and taught proper singing techniques to our group. I am referring to our coaches, Emman and Jo. The choir has improved, but we are definitely "work in progress".

The journey is not easy but we continue to serve God who inspires us. We remain strong and dedicated to give Him our best. As part of this growing family, I remain grateful to the love, care and support provided.

### Bethany Choir



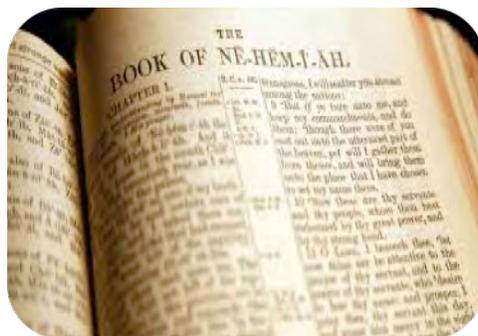
Mission in action

### During practice



# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## BS Corner



### Nourishment from the Word

[The reference liturgical readings from the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C): Gospel *Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21*; 1st reading *Nehemiah 8:2-4, 5-6, 8-10*; 2nd reading *1 Corinthians 12:12-30*]

The Gospel reading starts with St. Luke's introduction (*Lk 1:1-4*) addressing a certain Theophilus, where he tells us that his writings came from the eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, and he too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for us. He does this so that we will know the full truth about everything which have been taught to us. The 2nd part of the Gospel (*Lk 4:14-21*) tells us the story when Jesus begins His work as He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, where Jesus is proclaiming the words of the prophet Isaiah and He is saying to the people that His entire mission is to fulfill the scriptures citing the written passage in the scroll: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (Lk 4:18)*. Hearing this message of God's promises nourishes our soul and help us grow with our faith, hope and love with the Word of God.

The 1st reading connects with the Gospel like Jesus scene in the synagogue, where *Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly and while standing at one end of the open place, read out of the book from daybreak till midday, in the presence of the men, the women, and those children old enough to understand; and all the people listened attentively to the book of the law (Neh 8:2-3)*. We can imagine the scene of non-stop reading and interpreting the scripture for about six hours. In comparison to nowadays, we may observe and hear some people expressing inconvenience whenever our Holy Mass goes beyond an hour. The story tells us that the people did not get bored listening to the Word of God and they pro-actively responding while it moved them to tears. For as *Ezra opened the scroll so that all the people might see it — for he was standing higher up than any of the people —; and, as he opened it, all the people rose. Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people, their hands raised high, answered, "Amen, amen!" Then they bowed down and prostrated themselves before the LORD, their faces to the ground (Neh 8:5-6)*, and instructing and said to all the people: *"Today is holy to the LORD your God. Do not be sad, and do not weep" — for all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law (Neh 8:8-9)*. The Word of God is proclaimed as spirit and life. It nourishes us by giving us insights on the similarity of situations in the biblical times and in our own time. For those of us who take to heart the law like the audience listening to Ezra, we grow in knowledge and wisdom with the Word as it refreshes the soul, it rejoices the heart, it enlightens our sight in loving others, it endures forever, makes us faithful and true. In the 2nd reading from St. Paul tells us through his 1st letter to the Corinthians...*As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12-13)*. Understanding this message from Paul of drinking of one Spirit is to nourish us with the Word of God, and how this Word from the Spirit unites us and makes us grow into the one body of Christ consisting of so many parts unites people through the Word of God. In this Year

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# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## Living Rosary Group

### Daily Rosary Prayer: For An End to the Pandemic

A PRAYER FOR AN END TO THE PANDEMIC



Praying for Hope  
Amidst the  
Pandemic



Lord, Help Us Remember...

May we who are merely inconvenienced, remember those whose lives are at stake.  
May we who have no risk factors, remember those most vulnerable.  
May we who have the luxury of working from home, remember those who must choose between preserving their health or earning their rent.  
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close, remember those who have no options.  
May we who have to cancel our trips, remember those who have no safe place to go.  
May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market, remember those who have no margin at all.  
May we who settle in for a quarantine at home, remember those who have no home.  
As fear grips our country, let us choose love.  
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.

Amen.

Lord  
With Your  
Healing Hands.  
Heal all who are  
sick and End  
this Pandemic.  
Amen.

#### Prayer during a Pandemic

Loving God, Holy One,  
Your desire is for our wholeness and well-being.

We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.

We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.

We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.

We pray: may love, not fear, go viral. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.

Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.

Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence.

You, the God who does not abandon,  
You, the Holy One,  
breathing within us,  
breathing among us,  
breathing around us  
in our beautiful yet wounded world.

- Chris Koellhoffer, IHM



#### Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress,

my God, in whom I trust.  
Surely he will save you from the fowlers snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you say, The Lord is my refuge, and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. Because he loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue him. I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

## LBS Corner (cont'd from Page 4)

2022, with the LBS (Liturgical Bible Study) we will continue our study of the Word though the understanding of the connections of the liturgical readings in order to: (i) develop our desire and appetite to for the bible, (ii) deepen our spiritual relationship with each other and the community; (iii) grow our insights on the Word; (iv) provide rich and depth of sharing of our personal encounter and application of the Word, and (v) complement with the other programs and formation activities of the diocese, parishes, catholic communities, etc.

Please note that we are still having our LBS online through Zoom Video Conferencing on Thursdays at 9:15 pm (ID:320027131; PW:7NQKV6).

# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## English Sunday School

### My Sunday School Experience (by Max Yau)

I have been going to Sunday School for three years, but the first year of Sunday School was affected by COVID-19 forcing classes to be changed into virtual mode. The year of learning was then cancelled, forcing my class preparing to receive our First Holy Communion to have to wait until the following year. As the second year of Sunday school started there were a lot of ups and downs as we needed to switch modes once in a while due to the virus. Luckily, all the students cooperated with the teachers on zoom, staying active and attentive in class, making the school year able to continue throughout. Through this opportunity I would like to thank the teachers and staff in Sunday School for being able to adapt to the virtual lessons and giving their free time on Sundays to teach us about God and make us better Catholics. One of my most memorable topics was about the Holy Trinity which we learnt in the middle of the school year. I still remember the Holy Trinity represents God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, all in one – like an apple that has skin, meat, and seeds, all in one. It was one of my favorite topic and lesson.

I am now studying in Sunday School for my third year, preparing myself to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. In these few years, I truly start to feel closer to God than ever before. I think I am closer to Him because of me going to Sunday School and church more frequently, helping me learn more about God. I am truly grateful that I can have the opportunity to study in such a good church with great teachers who are willing to share their knowledge about God and give their time to share God's word. I hope I can spread God's word to others if I have the opportunity in the future. In this year, I hope to strengthen my connection with God and know more about Him. This has been a very fun experience for me, and I hope to continue expanding my knowledge about God.



*The Yau family*

### My Sunday School Experience (by Megan Yau)

Three years ago, it was my first day at Sunday School. I was excited but nervous at the same time. I have always been curious about learning more about God, but don't know how other classmates will treat me and maybe scared to ask teachers about questions. However, I thought that teachers would be nice, so I raised my hand and the teacher politely and clearly answered my questions.

First, class was face to face. I was happy that both teachers and classmates were very nice. I started confidently to answer the teachers' questions, more importantly I learnt a lot about God. The most memorable thing I learnt was about the Rosary. In the rosary was a lot of prayers for example Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostle's Creed, Glory Be. The main purpose of the rosary is to help remember certain events or mysteries in Jesus' life. I am very interested in learning the rosary.

However, the Covid situation had become so serious that we had to take class virtually and that also meant we had to take one more year of class to receive our first Holy Communion. Even so, I am very grateful for learning more things and to refresh my memories again.

In the second year, class was half zoom and half face to face. I was once again very happy to see my teachers and classmates and to be at the church. I finally received my first Holy Communion in May 2021. I want to thank my teachers and God that the process can go well.

This is my third year; I am very happy to continue to learn more and more about God.

# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## Community

### Prayer for the Present (by Andrea Wu)

When looking for the future, it is easy to forget that we live in the present. When we forget about the present, we are often too slow to realise the time that we have lost until it becomes the past.

Looking towards the future is an inevitable thing that everyone does. We cannot help but think of the next big investment, the next family gathering, or the next project to complete. However, with all these plans around us, it is easy to let the present slip away, preferring to lose ourselves to wistfully thinking of the future. The ironic thing is, when we let the present fall away by thinking of the future, we end up reminiscing about the past as well.



*From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. (Psalms 113:3)*

Andrea Wu



Caught in this cycle, I found that it is only during my prayers, that I can be grateful for the present, instead of recalling the past or making plans for the future.

A week before Chinese New Year break, school had to stop and revert back to online. I felt as if everything that had returned back to normal in the past months with in-person school disappeared, the ground pulled out under our feet once again. The memories of spending day after day at home with only a computer

screen for company filtered back in. It was not so long ago that being on campus was “normal” again, where we had been accustomed to see people in the hallways, have idle conversation between classes, or just simply interact with classmates. Any of us who have tried online learning or working will be familiar with the chronic silence that is found dwelling in the screen.

Reverting online seemed to be a video put on loop, a carbon copy of the past. Feeling the same frustration from the first online switch was inescapable, but when I turned towards God through prayer, I found that counting my blessings was easier than ever.

When I am able to pick out the silver linings and show gratitude to them, they seem to double. Whether it is being able to sleep a little more in the morning, having a productive class discussion with somewhat enthusiastic participation, or miraculously having a funny conversation in a breakout room, there will always be little parts of where we are *now* that seem to shine a little brighter than the past. By giving more attention to the sunbeams that peek out from the clouds clouds, my days brightened.

No matter how hard it is walking in a dark tunnel, there will always be comfort in seeing the light that God has paved for us along the way - the things that we can eternally be grateful for.

*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:5)*

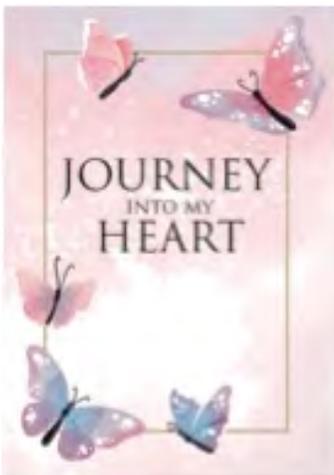
# THE HOMESTEAD – JAN 2022

## Spiritual Reflection

**Journey into my Heart** is a mini autobiography book written by Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM. Sr. Victoria shares her story as compass to pilgrim searchers of God. There are a total of 11 chapters in the book, and one chapter will be featured in Homestead every month.

### JOURNEY INTO MY HEART (CHAPTER 3)

#### *Attraction to the Eucharist*



A second important marker, the other 'bedrock' of my love relationship with God is the Eucharist.

Faith in Jesus present in the Eucharistic bread and wine is something I have taken for granted from childhood to adolescence. However, during my college days I used to hangout with some Protestant friends. Some of them, in their zeal to "evangelize me" brought me to film shows about the reformation period showing the abuses of the Catholic church. I also joined their Bible studies which were good in themselves but which, I realized later on, had the concrete intention to "rouse me from my slumber" and "convert" me to their denomination. I found it amusing in fact to hear their language: my protestant friends call themselves the "C's" (Christians) and we, Catholics and others outside the group are the "non-C's" (non-Christians)!

Inevitably, we came to a moment of confrontation regarding the Eucharist that is, the real presence of Christ in the species of bread and wine. For one thing, it was a revelation for me to know that the mainline Protestants (Methodists, Presbyterans, etc.) believe in the Lord's presence in the Eucharist, but only during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We Catholics, believe that this presence continues even after the celebration, that's why we have tabernacles and we have Eucharistic adoration and devotions. This was hard for them to understand and one of them, questioned me outright how could that be. I didn't know how to answer; what I know was that it was a mystery of faith that one adhered to unconditionally.

Just the same, the question led me to a real faith crisis. Fortunately, I have always been "provided" with very good witnesses and teachers of the faith. One of them was Fr. Restie Esguerra (God bless him and grant rest to his soul!). We studied John 6 together and came to the conclusion that even if this teaching (on the real presence of the Lord) is so difficult to understand, we have reason to take the words of the Lord as trustworthy. In verses 60-65 of that Chapter, Jesus himself said that it is not an easy teaching and that it could be offensive to some. Be that as it may, the disciples have to make their choice. So do I. And it was then that I made the leap of faith.

I believe that my crisis of faith in Jesus' presence in the Eucharist was not an insignificant one. It was a call to grow in faith. In fact, my Eucharistic devotion has actually matured to the point that it has become an integral part of my life, vocation and mission. The congregation I belong to, the PDDM sisters, has the Eucharistic apostolate among its primary ministries. In Jesus, the Bread of Life, we adore God's Real Presence, receive God's pervading sense of peace that can be likened to a simple-serene-assuring song: "I-am-with-you always!" And it is not a simple personal devotion but a ministry which aims to transform hearts and communities, indeed the whole ecosphere where we are present!

The Editorial Team of Homestead Newsletter wishes all of our  
Readers and Parishioners  
**A HAPPY & BLESSED NEW YEAR!**



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