



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

Parish Priest : Fr. Thomas Law
Address : 1 Star Street, Wanchai, H.K.
Tel : (852) 2527 7240
Email : mail@olmcchurch.org.hk
Website : <http://www.olmcchurch.org.hk>
Editor Email : olmchomestead@gmail.com

Summer Edition

**JUL-AUG
2022**

THE HOMESTEAD



Bishop H.E. Rev Stephen Chow celebrating OLMC's 72nd Feast Day Mass with us

We are truly blessed. For this year's Feast Day celebration, we have Bishop Stephen Chow celebrating Mass for us. Bishop Chow reminded us that being Catholic means serving the less fortunate, doing the right thing even though sometimes you do not want to, and allowing others to be who they are without passing judgment.

Fr. Thomas Law also mentions that if we need anything in life, we should always pray to Our Lady, say one Hail Mary, have faith in our good Lord, and all will be fulfilled.

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you ~ Luke 20:38

Homestead is hiding from the summer heat...

We will be back in September 2022.

The Editorial Board wishes all parishioners "Happy Summer Holidays"!

Did You Know?

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the name given to the Blessed Virgin Mary as patroness of the Carmelite Order. During the late 12th and early to mid-13th century, some Christian hermits were living on Mount Carmel which is located in northern Israel near the Mediterranean coastline.

This mountain is the one that Prophet Elijah stayed in when he was praying for Israel when the land was stricken with drought for three and a half years. Elijah sent his servant to see whether there was any sign of rain and on the seventh trial, the servant came back and told Elijah that a cloud had formed and rain eventually fell on the land of Israel.

The first Carmelites built their hermitages and a chapel on Mount Carmel. They dedicated this chapel to the Blessed Virgin, whom they termed as the "Lady of the place." They came to be known as the Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.





The Autumn of Life

Deacon Alex Kwok

In 1999, His Holiness Pope John Paul II wrote a personal letter to the elderly¹. “As an older person myself, I have felt the desire to engage in a conversation with you” (**para. 1**). Following the famous Roman orator Cicero, the saintly Pope called old age “*The autumn of life*”. If I may paraphrase a popular political jargon, old age is our “*harvest time*”. Compared with another imagery of the “*setting sun*”, “*the autumn of life*” is forward-looking indeed!

The life expectancy of ancient people was very much shorter than modern men. They rarely lived beyond seventy. So goes the Psalms, “*Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are strong.*” (**Psalms 90:10**) Nowadays, medical technology has so greatly advanced that if a person or his family is able to afford, it is possible to lead a life beyond one hundred and twenty which is a limit set by God (**Genesis 6:3**). Isn't that a blessing to be born a modern man?

Regrettably you would all agree with me that beyond fifty, our health could go in only one direction. The most men could do is to slow down the ageing process which seems to be irreversible. Working out and taking dietary supplements to stay young have become a lucrative market. The worst nightmare modern people fear is the Alzheimer's disease. Not only are your precious memories slipping through your fingers like water, but your control over your body parts is also losing. You start not recognizing your beloved ones. You fall involuntarily and have difficulty swallowing. Life becomes miserable to you as well as to your care-takers!

In ancient times when knowledge grew at a snail's pace, senior citizens enjoyed respect and dignity because they were the embodiment of wisdom! But nowadays, knowledge explodes at such a pace that nobody on this planet is able to master a small fragment of it even if they have the will and the power, not to mention senior citizens who lack both. Senior citizens are no longer able to command respect because fast-paced modern people do not buy their “*wisdom*”! As such, longevity is becoming more a curse than a blessing! Let us stay positive my dear older brothers and sisters! Memory failure is not as bad as you imagine. There are indeed many happy people who only remember “*good*” things in their lives. They are grateful to everybody they have met. Losing those good memories seems to be a pity. On the other hand, for those bitter people who only remember how others have cheated them and have bullied them, isn't losing those bad memories a good thing? Exactly! Alzheimer's disease is an indifferent equalizer. It wipes out both good and bad memories without showing any favouritism. Why then did I exhort you at the beginning of this paragraph to stay positive? It is because charity is a Christian duty. Stay positive, be grateful and remember only good things in your lives so that in your old age, you as well as your care-takers in the future will be happy! Stay negative, be cynical and remember only bad things in your lives, you're heaping coals of fire on your own heads as well as your future care-takers'. Everybody suffers until Alzheimer disease comes to your aid!

My dear older brethren! At the end of the day, we are all path-finders showing people how to cross over the threshold to eternal life --- death. Sooner or later, all of us would return to our Creator and eternity is our destiny. We'll either be gaining infinitely good experiences in eternal life in the company of all the angels and saints or infinite bitterness in hell in the company of Satan. The present social milieu is a depressing one. Let our remaining days be a guidepost to those around us, showing them different paths to eternity which shall be bitterness or sweetness of different degrees. With the support of Our Lady of Mount Carmel who went all the way to support her elderly cousin Elizabeth, let us show people the true colours of autumn and a gleam of hope in eternity. Amen! God bless!

¹ https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_01101999_elderly.html

Liturgical Formation

Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

Last 10th of July, the anticipated OLMC Parish Feast day Eucharistic Celebration was made memorable by the presence of our Bishop H.E. Rev. Stephen Chow. Thanks to the invitation of our Parish Priest, Fr. Thomas Law, Bishop Chow graciously presided the Mass with the Chinese community at 10 am, and then with the English community at the 11.45 am. He even had the opportunity to greet the parishioners of the 1.30 English Mass briefly.

The blessings of the day overflowed in the informal dialogue that the Bishop had with some representatives of the Parish. There we were able to share the joys and anxieties of Parish life, as well as our hopes and dreams. Bishop Chow also shared his words of wisdom with us and encouraged us to have a deeper faith experience that goes beyond 'treating religion as simply part of our culture.' Hopefully, if a real conversion experience takes place in us, we can also grow more fully in our commitment to the Lord and in service to his people.

In the light of this desire, I would like to bring in here an important "entry point" for us in the growth of our relationship with the Lord that is, through our liturgical formation. On 29th of June, the Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul, Pope Francis published his Apostolic Letter entitled "Desiderio Desideravi" on the Liturgical Formation of the People of God. For many, liturgy is reduced to participation in Sunday Mass and this participation is oftentimes not of the best quality but a simple obligation to fulfill. In this letter, the Pope encourages us to take a renewed gaze at the Liturgy as an intimate moment of encounter with the crucified and risen Lord Jesus. Let me quote here some parts of the letter: *"For us a vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good. We need to be present at that Supper, to be able to hear his voice, to eat his Body and to drink his Blood. We need Him. In the Eucharist and in all the sacraments we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and of having the power of his Paschal Mystery reach us. The salvific power of the sacrifice of Jesus, his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling reaches us through the celebration of the sacraments. I am Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the man possessed by demons at Capernaum, the paralytic in the house of Peter, the sinful woman pardoned, the woman afflicted by hemorrhages, the daughter of Jairus, the blind man of Jericho, Zacchaeus, Lazarus, the thief and Peter both pardoned."* (DD 11)

What a beautiful invitation to review and renew our participation in the liturgy! With these words, the Pope beckons us to interiorize the gospel message more personally and let the grace of the Sacraments overflow in our lives. May I invite you then to take time to read this Letter of our Holy Father which can be downloaded through the Vatican website. It is an important resource for spiritual formation firstly for our personal life and secondly as volunteers in the various ministries of our beloved OLMC Parish.

I end by thanking all our sisters and brothers who assist us in the various ministries of the English community of OLMC Parish for their generous service and collaboration. On behalf of our Parish priest, I greet you all a restful and joyful month. Normally, July in temperate countries is vacation time, but since the time of the pandemic, we seem to have lost all parameters of times and seasons. Be that as it may, our faith in the Lord will always accompany us with the assurance that *"in Him, we live and move and have our being"* (**Acts 17:28**) hence all seasons of life – childhood, adulthood, senior years – could be lived out in trust of God's wonderful care and providence. This, we hope to do under the loving gaze and maternal guidance of Mary, our Lady of Mount Carmel!



Sr. Victoria will be back in September 2022 after her break. See you soon!

Feast Day Thanksgiving Mass – 10 July



↑ with parishioners

∞∞ Meet and greet sessions with the Bishop ∞∞

↓ with ministry coordinators



OLMC Main Page
on Facebook



OLMC Page for English Speaking
Parishioners on Facebook



OLMC Website
<http://www.olmcchurch.org.hk>



Litany of The Virgin Mary ~ 17 July

Article written by: Aurora Parangit

I was very happy to attend the talk given by Deacon Alex Kwok on the Litany of the Virgin Mary. Deacon Alex started with the Catholic Prayers, and explained the Sign of the Cross, Nicene Creed, Litanies, and the structure of the litanies. Here is my summary of what I learned from his talk.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

When we start our prayer with the sign of the cross, we are invoking the Triune God. It reminds us that God the Father is the creator, God the Son is the redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier. The Apostles ask Jesus to teach them how to pray (**Mathew 6:9-13**). This is how you are to pray: *“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

During Mass, we pray the Nicene Creed to profess our Faith. Deacon Alex also discussed the various devotions such as the praying of the Rosary, Novena and the Litany. He also mentioned the 6 Litanies that the Catholic Church approves:

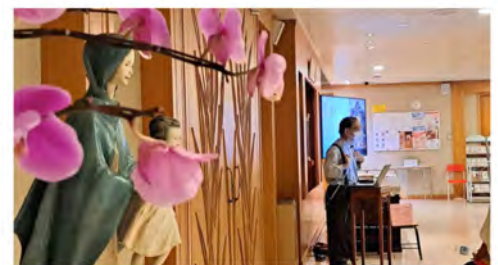
- The holy name of Jesus
- The sacred heart of Jesus
- The most precious blood of Jesus
- The Blessed Virgin Mary
- St. Joseph
- The Saints

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LITANY (KYRIE)

- Lord have mercy - Christ have mercy.
- Lord have mercy on us - Christ hear us.
- God the Father of heaven – Have mercy on us.
- God the Son redeemer of the world – Have mercy on us.

STRUCTURE OF THE LITANY (INVOCATION)

- Holy Mary – Pray for us.
- Holy mother of God – Pray for us.
- Holy virgin of virgins – Pray for us.
- Mother of Christ – Pray for us.
- Mother of the Church – Pray for us.
- Mother of Christ – Pray for us.
- Mother of the Church – Pray for us.
- Mother of Mercy – Pray for us.
- Holy Mary – Pray for us
- Holy Mother of God – Pray for us.
- Mother of Christ – Pray for us.
- Mother of the Church – Pray for us.
- Mother of Mercy – Pray for us.
- Holy Mary - Pray for us
- Holy Mother of God – Pray for us.



World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly ~ 24 July



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2022



On 24 July, OLMC celebrated the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time and the 2nd World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Established by Pope Francis in January 2021, the observance is celebrated each year on the fourth Sunday of July, coinciding with the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary's parents and Jesus' grandparents, Saints Joachim and Anne.

The theme for this year's World Day is "In old age they will still bear fruit" (**Psalm 92:15**) and emphasizes how grandparents and the elderly are a value and a gift both for society and for ecclesial communities.

In his message for the second World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, Pope Francis writes: "Old age is no time to give up and lower the sails, but a season of enduring fruitfulness: a new mission awaits us and bids us look to the future. 'The special sensibility that those of us who are elderly have for the concerns, thoughts and the affections that make us human should once again become the vocation of many. It would be a sign of our love for the younger generations'. This would be our own contribution to the revolution of tenderness, a spiritual and non-violent revolution in which I encourage you, dear grandparents and elderly persons, to take an active role."



↓ Fr. Law and Fr. Matthew carried out the Litany of Anointing for the Elderly and the Sick after the 11:45am Mass ↓



Sing along with Mary ~ 27 July

Participants (Choirs & Individuals)

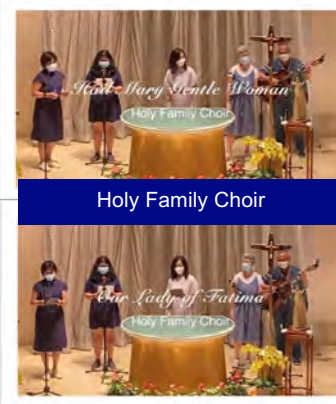
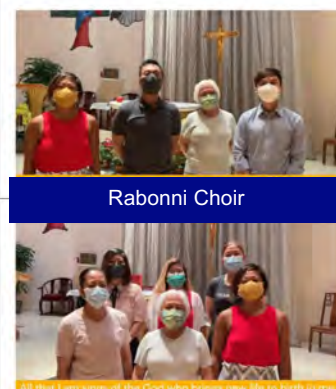
1. 嘉諾撒仁愛女修會
2. OLMC Rabboni Choir
3. 星期六上/下午班的慕道
4. Holy Family Choir
5. OLMC 中文組
6. Derma Obiso
7. Francis Choristers
8. OLMC Bethany Choir
9. 朱姑娘
10. Legion of Mary 聖母軍



Songs (in English & Tagalog):

Tota pulchra es, Maria
Magnificat (All that I am)
Hail Mary Gentle Woman
Our Lady of Fatima
Ave Maria by Giulio Caccini
Ave Maria Gratiz Plena
56:34 Maria Babaye Sa Pagtoo
O Maria Virgo Potens
Immaculate Mary
Salve Regina
O Santa Maria
Legion hymn in Latin & Chinese
Be with us Mary
Awit sa Ina ng Sto. Rosario

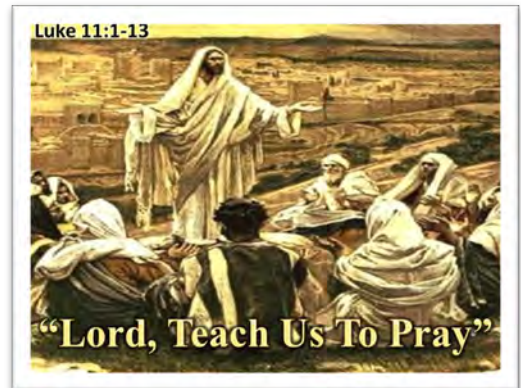
Check this out on YouTube ~ <https://youtu.be/crjrmST24Bs>



Persistence

Reference liturgical readings for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year 2022):
Gospel **Luke 11:1-13**; 1st reading **Genesis 18:20-32**; 2nd reading **Colossians 2:12-14**

In this gospel of Luke we can observe 3 lessons from the reading on the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples when one of them asked Jesus...*"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples"* (Lk 11:1). Jesus indeed taught them how to pray. In doing so, He did not center the attention to the words to be said or things to be mentioned while they are praying, but He focused on the 'attitude' that they should have while praying. Thus, He said to them, *"When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test"* (Lk 11:2-4). First lesson: we are taught that we have a father in heaven whose name is holy and who listens to our petitions on our daily needs, and such connection is the key in establishing our relationship with God.



Our Lord is teaching us whenever we are praying to be 'at home' with our God the Father in heaven so we may readily open our hearts, our minds/thoughts, our desires, our dreams, and everything that concerns us because we know that we are related with God. In this part of the gospel teaching, Jesus encourages us to deepen our relationship with God. Second lesson: As we grow our connection and consistent communication with God, we will be persistent with our prayers because we truly believed and that God answer our prayers in His own ways and in His own time, or what and when is best we should receive our answered prayers. This deep relationship is shown in the middle part of the gospel, that a friend in need who has a deep relationship with a neighbor who is already sleeping *"...will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence"* (Lk 11:8).

Jesus' teaching continues... *"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Lk 11:9-10). Third lesson: our persistent persevering prayers give us the confidence that our prayers will be answered. The acronym **"ASK"** (ask, seek & knock) remains in our memory as we persistently offer prayers not only intended for our own needs, but, specially when we are interceding for others who are sick, needy, to comfort the depressed & elderly, and for the souls of departed friends and all others in purgatory that needs our help for interceding prayers.

The 1st reading connects with the gospel in the persistent prayer of Abraham that reveals to us the just heart of God. Abraham begged the Lord on behalf of 50 just people, asking if God will destroy Sodom and God said no, and then Abraham persisted on behalf of the just people until the number was reduced to 10 and the Lord said: *"For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it"* (Gn 18:32). So, the persistence of Abraham was in sync with the heart of God to the innocent ones and we get to know that our God is just and compassionate.

When we pray, we have to see our relationship with God as it will define how deep it is and how strong our trust in His saving power as in responsorial taken from Psalm 138 we pray... *"Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me"*.



Please note that we continue to have our LBS sessions online through Zoom Video Conferencing on Thursdays at 9:30pm (ID:320027131; PW:7NQKV6). All are welcome to join.

Feast Day on 16 July

While Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the patron saint of the Carmelite Order, the basis for the universal Church honoring Mary under this title dates to her appearance to an English Carmelite St. Simon Stock in the 13th century. She gave him the Brown Scapular, a garment worn by religious over the neck and shoulders as an apron, to be worn by Carmelites "as a sign of her protection." It is a Marian devotional practice which, over the centuries, has spread to Catholics around the world. We celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on 16 July.

Mount Carmel has been a place for prayers and to be to God since the time of the prophet Elijah in the 10th century before Christ (cf. **1 Kings 18:41**). There, also, Christian hermits persisted in prayer. And there, in the 12th century, the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel was officially founded.

The 13th century, however, was a time of persecution for the Carmelites, and, in the midst of this trial, on 16 July, 1251 the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Prior of the Carmelites, giving him the Brown Scapular. She said to him, *"This is a privilege for you and the order: whoever dies wearing the Scapular will be saved."* The wearing by others of a miniature version of the Carmelite Scapular, known simply as "the Brown Scapular" from the color of their habit, has come to mean being joined spiritually with them in accepting the Blessed Mother's love, devoting oneself to the spirituality of the Carmelites, and trusting that Our Lady will protect them in life and at their death.

Our Lady gave the Brown Scapular to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite, on 16 July 1251. Since that time, the Brown Scapular, a small version of the Carmelite habit, is a sign of living for Jesus, following the example of the Blessed Virgin. The Brown Scapular indicates that one is in communion with the Carmelites and living a Marian spirituality as they do.

A PRAYER OF CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

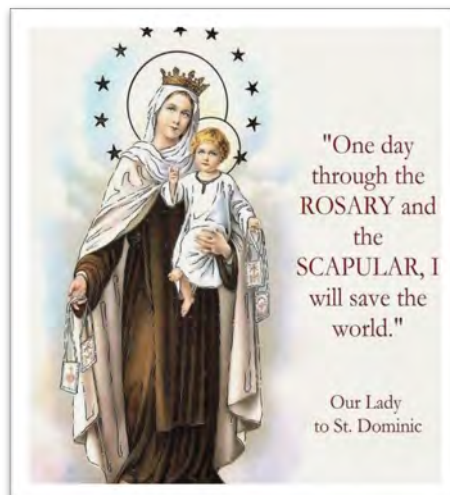
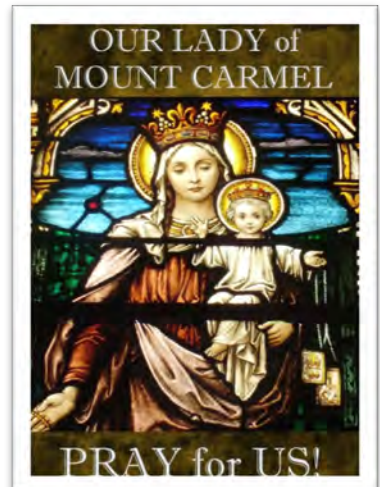
O Mary, Queen and Mother of Carmel, I come today to consecrate myself to you, for my whole life is but a small return for the many graces and blessings that have come from God to me through your hands.

Since you look with special kindness on those who wear your Scapular, I implore you to strengthen my weakness with your power, to enlighten the darkness of my mind with your wisdom, and to increase in me faith, hope and charity that I may repay each day my debt of humble homage to you.

May your Scapular bring me your special protection in my daily struggle to be faithful to your divine son and to you. May it separate me from all that is sinful in life and remind me constantly of my duty to imitate your virtues. From now on, I shall strive to live in God's presence, and offer all to Jesus through you.

Dearest Mother, support me by your never-failing love and lead me to paradise through the merits of Christ and your own intercession.

Amen.



Legion of Mary 2010-2022: The Foundational Years

By: Sister Juliet Antero

Mid 2010 the Shield of the Church Legion Praesidium (“Px”) visited us the Filipino Group of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. That time we had only one English Mass at 11.30 am. The said Praesidium is composed of Filipino and Chinese members, among whom are Sister Precy and Sister Mary Jean. They introduced the Legion of Mary to us since we were not familiar with the group. They kept coming back to ‘serenade’ us, and it took some time for us to accept their invitation to join the Legion of Mary.

In early 2011, four of us in the Filipino group said ‘yes!’ At first, maybe it was out of curiosity and embarrassment that we gave in. But through the guidance of our Blessed Mother Mary, we were also given the grace to grow as members of the new Praesidium called Our Lady of Mount Carmel. One member from Our Lady of Sorrows Px, Sister Lolita, joined us. Our First Spiritual Directress was Sr. Fatima Santhosam, MEP. Sister Victoria Cheuk (from the Shield of the Church Px) acted as President, while yours truly served as Assistant President. As ‘babies’ we were very obedient to everything that Sister Victoria said since it was quite difficult for us to understand the ‘terminologies’ of the Legion Handbook. Through the support of the Shield of the Church Px, Our Lady of Sorrows Px and the Curia Rosarii, our spirituality matured. Among the apostolic works we carried out were the following: Evangelization which includes visitation of elderly persons in the Home for the Aged, Home visitation, Enthronement Prayer and Outreach; Pastoral and Parish Work which included acting as ‘librarian’ in OLMC for those who wanted to borrow books, assisting in sales of religious articles, leading the Rosary Prayer in the Parish, Flower arrangement, Singing in the Choir, Ushering and Collecting at Mass, Parish Cleaning, helping in the Caritas Bazaar; Training and Formation Work which included the Study of the Legion Handbook, Personal and Telephone Contact to recruit potential members and auxiliary members plus additional services to help form other members.



Thanksgiving

By: Sister Jeany L. Arong

In our journey as Legionaries, we have experienced stormy weather, sometimes our boats sail roughly but above all we have enjoyed God’s love and grace through Mama Mary and the guidance of our mother Praesidium the Shield of the Church. Thank you to Fr. Cuff who also supported us in our early years as a group.

To everyone who has been part of our journey, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude: Sister Fely, Sister Catherine, Sister Rose, Sister Judith, Sister Romela, Sister Elena, Sister Leony, Sister Melanie, Brother Joseph. We also thank our former spiritual directors: Sr. Fatima Santhosam MEP, Sr. M. Regina Lito PDDM, and Sr. M. Jennifer PDDM.

Lastly, our sincerest thanks to Fr. Thomas Law, our Parish Priest, for his support and guidance. Our gratitude as well to our Spiritual Directress, Sr. M. Victoria Victorino PDDM for her dedication, guidance and encouragement, for her unfailing support infusing in us the strength we need in living out our life of faith as Legionaries. Thank you too to Deacon Alex Kwok for his spiritual guidance, his care and concern for us and his kind understanding.

Thank you, Mama Mary for leading us to Jesus. All glory and honor be yours forever and ever, Lord!

The Riddle of a Broken Heart

Roger Kho

The story of a homeless person is a jigsaw of broken pieces. It takes a persistent patience to listen and understand one's petty grumbles in order to create a bridge of trust. And to rebuild a person as a person is not a simple and easy task. Sometimes one has his own scars and traumas, which have to be covered up. In another time, it is we who have our own broken pieces that make us not able to walk in someone else's shoes. We see greed and rancor with our pride and prejudice. We hope to help the socially marginalised with our own bias and preference. A man who loses his bare protection of four walls is desperately in need of a substitute for security. But a broken soul trapped within a human body can only be consoled temporarily by plentiful and mutable things in the world. Yet those trivial material things seem so important when the neglected is actually craving for more attentions and cares. We are to the same extent without exception that sometimes we focus too much on our earthly needs. As we are all corporeal beings with corrupted spirits that make us not able to fully understand our own self.

In contemplation of the brokenness of others, I have seen my own brokenness in this mirror image. Maybe we can do some caring services to mend one single broken heart. It is only our heavenly Father who sends Jesus Christ to redeem us from our ways that had all gone astray like sheep

↓ Every Thursday, volunteers come into OLMC to pack foodstuff and essential necessities ↓



↓ Every Friday, volunteers will then distribute the packs to the poor, homeless and elderly ↓



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 (1 introduction and 10 chapters) in the book, and one chapter will be featured in Homestead every month.

JOURNEY INTO MY HEART (Chapter 9) – Perfection of Love



The perfection of love is a great challenge in the community life of consecrated persons like me. I truly believe it can be done, as upheld by the Second Vatican Council decree on the adaptation and renewal of religious life entitled *Perfectae Caritatis* (*Perfect Charity*).

But truth be told, the Lord's injunction "*Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*" used to perplex me. I used to interpret it as a call to do things perfectly in my usual obsessive-compulsive way: cross your t's, dot your i's, etc.

And then, in God's goodness, I learned reading his Word in its proper context. Chapter 5 of Matthew begins with the Beatitudes or the new 'being' that enjoys the blessings of God's reign. It is being poor in spirit, being meek, being merciful, being pure of heart, being a peacemaker (see complete list in **Mt 5:3-12**). And then the gospel goes deeper into the heart of the commandments as Jesus explains how he perfects, not cancels, the first covenant (see **Mt 5:17-48**). He gives specific instances: murder is

something that begins in the heart, in the intertwined anger and negativities that run deep in the heart and which, sooner or later, explode into violent action. At the end of this chapter, Jesus cites the old way of relating with neighbors and enemies: love one and hate the other, very natural indeed! But following Jesus challenges us to go beyond the natural, go overboard, spillover, so to say. Be perfect in loving ALL – neighbors and enemies alike, like the heavenly Father does.

When I entered religious life, I thought this was easy to do. Ideally, at least, I thought I wouldn't have 'enemies' in the convent because we all entered this life out of the same motive: we are all trying our best to follow Jesus' commandment of love. But alas, being such a normal person, I later realize that there was always one or two persons who 'turned me off' and made me dream of other lives! In whatever mission I was sent, in the Philippines and abroad, there were always personalities that challenged me to the extreme. And perhaps, who knows, for them, the feeling was mutual: I am also a difficult person to be with!

Hence it is here, in this sphere of human interaction that I realize I should apply the perfection that Jesus is talking about in his gospel. And what have I learned so far, how can I grow in loving my 'enemies' (in this case, the persons I find difficult to love, much less, like)?

It happened once, while I was in line for Holy Communion in our community chapel, I noticed Sister in front of me; she was one of those who made my life difficult. As she was receiving Jesus in communion, an insight flashed into me: 'I am receiving the same Jesus! We have the same Person inside us... we are in the process of becoming the same Person.' I was shaken by the insight and as I continued to reflect on it, I felt something within me changed. And gradually I noticed that something in our relationship changed too. Up to this day, Sister remains one of my closest friends, a true sister in spirit.

I realize that in every human interaction inside and outside the convent, I need to recall the divine essence both in the person and in me. This is my best card in responding to the challenge to 'love all.' The energy of the Spirit of love, present in me and in everyone I meet, will help me take to heart this gospel of love and will empower me to rise up to the challenge.

+++ To Be Continued +++