



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

OCT
2021

THE HOMESTEAD

ALL OF US ARE SAINTS

BY: DEACON ALEX KWOK

Before the creation of this known universe, God has in mind a grand and beautiful design. In His ineffable mind, He wants to populate the universe with beautiful souls, pleasing to Him as well as challenging to Him. Let us call these beautiful souls **saints**, too innumerable to count. They shall be human beings in the ages to come and the Son of God shall become ... In short, the visible and invisible universes shall be populated by zillions of zillions of saints.



The Catholic Church commemorates these saints because they have successfully led a heroic life according to the Beatitudes. Together with St. Paul, they are able to boast, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*" (2 Timothy 4:7-8) Unfortunately, we only have 365 days a year. Obviously, there is not enough room to accommodate all these saints and our brains are too busy to remember all. Therefore, the Catholic Church set aside **November 1** to be the **ALL SAINTS DAY** to commemorate many many unsung heroes whose humble lives are scarcely known by people at all. But definitely God knows and is pleased.

Brethren! Lest you do not know, all of us are called to be saints ever since the Old Testament. Check it out! Yahweh says, "*Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*" (Leviticus 19:2) In case you feel that attaining holiness is too lofty a goal for you, Jesus Christ our Lord makes holiness

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



OLMC Main Page
on Facebook



OLMC Page for English Speaking
Parishioners on Facebook



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



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



more accessible in the gospels, saying “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (**Matthew 5:48**) Even better, “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” (**Luke 6:36**) Who then can complain that God demands too lofty a target for us to reach? In fact, all of us are gifted in different ways. Therefore, no two paths to sainthood would be identical. Thus in 2018, Pope Francis affirms once more in his Apostolic Exhortation “*Gaudete et Exsultate*” that all the faithful, **each in his or her own way**, are called by the Lord to perfect holiness. We should not grow discouraged before saints whose holiness appears unattainable. We are not meant to copy them. (**GE#11**) Bear in mind that all of us are called to be saints, to be ambassadors of reconciliation. (**2 Corinthians 5:20**) Let’s joyfully tell the world the good news that God does not count their trespasses against them (**5:19**). God wants all of us to be saints.

While we celebrate the **Triumphant Church** in heaven, the community of saints on November 1, we the **Pilgrim/Missionary Church** on earth also remember the **Suffering Church** in Purgatory on **November 2**, the **ALL SOULS Day** and the whole month of November. Some people claim that the Bible alone is the basis of their belief. They are not able to find “Purgatory” in the Bible. Therefore they dismiss the existence of Purgatory and the tradition of offering prayers for the deceased as idolatrous. I would reply that they know not the Bible nor the power of God. They have forgotten Jesus’ teaching in the gospels that God “*is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.*” (**Mark 12:27**) Perhaps these people have misplaced their faith elsewhere and need to relearn the good news.

In truth, we have to admit that human nature is fragile. Thus, the Catholic Church offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation to restore us once we break our baptismal vows. However, some of us are stiff-necked and reject God’s mercy and the ministry of the Church. Consequently, they end up dying in a “cancerous” state, in which there are too much *fat, cholesterol* and even *tumours* in their souls, preventing them from partaking fully in God’s heavenly banquet. They need to spend time in Purgatory to purge those ‘*tumours*’. Today, we dedicate in particular the month of November to pray for these souls. Probably they were homeless before they passed away, survived by nobody to remember them. Therefore, praying for the souls in Purgatory, whether known or unknown, is a genuine work of mercy!



Brethren! Let’s offer prayers and masses for them in November and beyond. Who knows, perhaps we too might be in their company one day! God bless.



Come, Holy Spirit!

By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor." (Lk 4:18) We re-echo these words of our Lord Jesus Christ as we celebrate the month of October, the month of the Mission. This year's celebration takes on added significance as the Church opens the Synod of Bishops 2021-2023.

The preparatory document for the Synod announced earlier: "The path entitled 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission' solemnly opened on October 9 – 10 in each

particular Church throughout the world. Then comes the preparatory consultations in the Dioceses of the world leading up to the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023, followed by the implementation phase."

What is a Synod, we might ask? It comes from the Greek words: *sun* (pronounced *syn*) = together and *odos* (pronounced *hodos*) = way, path, walk, hence 'walking together,' 'journeying together,' or even 'pilgrimage together.' Pope Francis, in calling together the People of God to this journey, says, "it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." It will be a time of reflecting together on our experience as Church so that we may learn which processes help us: to live our communion, to achieve participation and to open ourselves to the mission.

In this "journeying together" we need the presence and power of God's Spirit to enlighten, strengthen and empower us especially in following the words and ways of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps even now, as we repeat the words: *"the Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor,"* we can already ask, "Who are the poor in our community and society that the Lord wants us to reach out to?" "What is the good news that we would like to proclaim to them?" "How can we achieve a deeper communion with them and invite them to participate more fully in the mission of our Church?"

May Mary, Mother of the Church and the Mission, intercede for us as we undertake together this challenging synodal process!



DEEPENING OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Retreat took place on October 19-20 at Shek O Retreat Center



After several weeks of planning, Sr. Victoria Victorino PDDM, accompanied us to the Shek O Retreat Center for an overnight spiritual retreat. There were 9 of us, and this was the group's first spiritual retreat together.

The retreat was divided into 2 sessions with a concluding integration session where we shared our reflections and insights:

1. Reviewing our Pilgrimage of Life; and
2. Deepening and Living out Mary's Virtues: *Purity, Faith, Fidelity*.

After the sessions, we were asked to reflect by looking back on our life's journey and our journey with our Blessed Mother Mary. Our sharing made me realize that with every trial we face in life we are gifted and blessed by God. And with these spiritual gifts we become stronger. We put our trust in God knowing that God will not give us more than we can handle (**1 Cor 10:13**)

Also our group's devotion to Mother Mary, through our weekly rosary prayer and Sunday gospel reflection, has helped each one of us in our faith journey. And as sisters in Christ, we support and pray for each other especially during difficult times.

One of the highlights of the retreat was the Eucharistic Adoration. It was a quiet time before God, a time to talk to and be with God. We prayed the 7 Sorrows Rosary and some went to Confession.

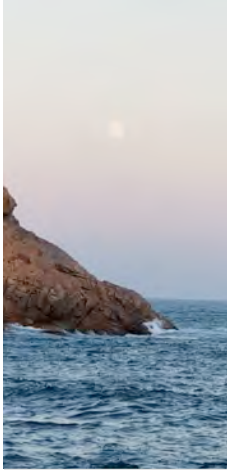
There was also a morning prayer and mass in the chapel which had a spectacular view of the sea. In between we had our meals and walks around the area.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Let us hear what the retreatants have to say:



It was at first difficult to slow down because of the pent-up excitement but it was all in all a wonderful retreat! Praise be to God!
~Carol~

As I sat before the Blessed Sacrament at the retreat house, looking over the serene waters of the sea and being surrounded by the beauty of nature, I recalled the words of St. Peter at the Transfiguration, "Lord, it is good for us to be here". But then, my heart became saddened as I thought about returning to our world, which is full of pain, sorrow and tears. I got down on my knees and prayed for strength, wisdom and a deeper faith. Seeing the beauty and majesty of the natural world that God created while also knowing the pain that man can create, I contemplated deeply and prayed about what our world can be. And this prayer came to mind: "Dear Lord, you love me so much that you will never let me face my fears and trials alone. Thank you, my Lord and my Savior ~Mary~

I am grateful that I learned the Seven Sorrows Rosary. Meditating on Holy Mary and the seven significant events in her life changes our own pain, suffering into prayers and offerings. The benefits of changing our suffering into redemptive suffering will benefit myself and also for our family, friends and especially those who have no one to pray for them. I will remind myself always to pray this seven Sorrows Rosary whenever I am sick, in pain and distressed ~Anonymous~

The Retreat was a memorable experience for me to review my Christian life of 50 years! I felt I am now more reconnected back to God, Jesus and Blessed Mother Mary! I had peace and rest of mind through group discussions, Eucharistic Adoration, confessions and prayers! Along with it, I feel that the reuniting of our sisterhood was made stronger as we were able to share openly our fears and blessings and receive comfort and support from each other! Thank you Sister Victoria in organizing this fruitful retreat and thank you Mary, Celia and the founders of this Living Rosary Group which I am grateful to join at the time of my sorrows and confusion through the introduction by my guardian angel friend Shirley! May we be blessed always! ~Jenny~

I look at the nature which surrounded us beautifully. I always bear a repentant heart to what I have done to the environment. Thank you God for giving us this beautiful land. Amen ~Christine~

It was a very exhilarating and heartwarming retreat. It is a blessing to be with Sr. Victoria and rosary ladies ~Celia~

It is my utmost pleasure to assist Sr. Victoria in the preparation of our annual retreat over logistics. Our last group Pilgrimage in Macau was already 3 years ago! In 2018 after I helped book the van and driver, I arrived late and had my last minute jump on boat at the pier! This anecdote remains an eternal, happy joke of the group. Actually for me it is an excellent training opportunity to enhance my responsibility and involvement to this wonderful Rosary Group. I learned a lot how to take care of others instead of just focus on my own personal needs.

It is my honor to be invited by Sr. Victoria to serve as guitarist during Adoration on the first night of our retreat. When I first practiced the song "In the Lord I will be ever thankful" introduced by Sr. Victoria, I have a bit of a doubt why the last lyric said "the Lord is near"? Why only near? Because during Adoration, I felt His Real Presence and I sing in my heart "Lift up your voices, the Lord is HERE".

And thanks to the encouraging reply from Sr. Victoria: "Brava, Michelle. The Lord is near = the Lord is here, close to you..." Thank you Sr. Victoria for being our Spiritual Director and Guardian Angel always. Alleluia!!! ~Michelle~



Celebrating 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines

By: Precy Santos



Victorino, PDDM. Would you believe that I was kind of not so confident if I will be able to do it? Sure, I say the rosary every day, but not in Tagalog (I had to prepare a printout of the set of prayers in Tagalog, just in case I get 'lost'). This made me reflect on how far one can be so detached from her own culture. The experience is a good reminder that even when we are comfortable in a foreign country, we should still not lose and forget our identity but rather maintain our language, traditions and practices, while embracing that of our host country.

Another reflection I had on that day is how beautiful it feels to be reciting the rosary and attending a mass together with a number of priests of different nationalities who concelebrated it, and with hundreds of people gathered together praying and celebrating a milestone of our Catholic faith. It is a significant event for us Filipinos as we commemorate the introduction of Christianity in the Philippines 500 years ago. The atmosphere was very different and the connection of all the attendees seems to be more powerful that we all want to be closer to God through all our prayers and thanksgiving for the gift of our Catholic faith.

The theme of the celebration is "Gifted to Give". It is taken from the Gospel of Matthew **(10:8)**.

Above is the logo of the celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, and this is its explanation:

- The logo of the celebration depicts the first baptism in the Philippines and includes representations of our culture and faith. It includes a cross, a ship, the sun, and a rosary.
- The cross-planted by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan on the island of Cebu signifies Christianity, serves as the mast of the ship.
- The ship-represents the navigators of the expedition that brought the faith to the island. It also signifies the Church and its sacraments.
- A dove-symbolizes the Holy Spirit, which shares the "Divine Life" in the sacrament of baptism. It also looks like a cloud that manifests the presence of God. "It is also slightly attached to the cross or the mast as a sail of the ship, significantly telling us that through the Holy Spirit the missionaries were led to our country, bringing us to Christianity,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

- The circular pattern of the Holy Spirit shows that it navigates all around the world as God is a missionary God who commissioned the Church for world mission".
- The central figure on the logo is taken from Philippine national artist Fernando Amorsolo's "First Baptism in the Philippines" painting.
- The sun-a trademark of Amorsolo's various artworks, was derived from the Philippine flag, suggesting the idea that the country is "the pearl of the orient sea."
- It also signifies new life, a new beginning, the risen Christ, the hope of our salvation.
- The "ichthus" or the fish, which symbolizes Jesus, is a reminder that the faith we professed is the same faith as that of the early Christians. Its red color signifies the blood of the martyrs, the "seed of Christian faith in imitation of Christ."
- The 2021 observance is a reminder of how Filipinos embraced the Catholic faith.

Living in faith is being open to see and recognize the many faces of God in our world. Growing in faith is being able to go beyond the self and work together as one community, regardless of gender, faith, nationality, culture and age, for the good of all and of our planet Earth.



By: Mary Jeanne Abad

It was a humbling, blessed and wonderful experience that we were invited to be part of a beautiful Eucharistic Celebration of the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. I had never thought that I would be chosen as one of the readers. I said to myself that I could not do it

as I am not used to speaking in front of a large congregation. But thank God for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, He let me deliver the readings despite my nervous feelings. Thank you for the beautiful and inspiring homily of Fr. Flandez. He reminded us that OUR FAITH is a GIFT from GOD and we should nurture our faith in the sacrament. God built His church to let us unite as one community, to support and to help build one another and we must not allow our ego and our pride to control us. We need to surrender our pride and ego in order to build and nourish our community. Our faith unites us to become one. TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!



“To See...”

Reference liturgical readings for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year 2021): Gospel [Mark 10:46-52](#); 1st reading [Jeremiah 31:7-9](#); 2nd reading [Hebrews 5:1-6](#).

The gospel reading is a story of Jesus' encounter with a blind man and beggar. As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." ([Mk 10:46-47](#)). Even though Bartimaeus is blind, he uses his sense of hearing to be attentive of what is happening and paying attention to what is going on within the vicinity waiting for anyone whom he could beg. Sensing that Jesus is nearby, at the top of his voice, he cried out for help. We have similarity to Bartimaeus when we encounter Jesus everyday through our prayers. In the silence of our heart we also lift up our voices when we ASK – Ask, Seek and Knock on for God's mercy, grace, and pray for healing not only for ourselves but also intercedes for our neighbors and loved ones. With our strong faith, we know that Jesus is the source that could meet our expectations to heal us of our various shortcomings, sickness and weaknesses – physical, mental & spiritual. We also know the heart of Jesus so well because we believe in Him, and we know Jesus better because we see Him with the light of faith the shines though. When we trust in God, like Bartimaeus, we are attentive and we can detect and be able to see His presence, power, and love around us.



As Bartimaeus continues with his begging for help, many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. ([Mk 10:47-50](#)). Bartimaeus can't be silenced as his continuous noise towards Jesus is like our persistent prayers to God that eventually will find its way and answers. We can associate his blindness with our own helplessness, as we know that Jesus is open to all and full of compassion to those who are in need. In faith, we truly believe our prayers would be heard, if only we persisted in sincerely offering it – as Bartimaeus was right in his approach as Jesus called and allowed him to come closer, and in doing so leaving behind his cloak – a precious possession of a beggar as a blanket to keep him warm, it's his shelter and his only wealth. The cloak is sometimes like our personal possession, the thing we are most attached and value the most that holds us back to be closer to God. Same as the character in the gospel, when we truly entrust our hopes and expects answers to our sincere desires to be healed, we abandon whatever it is that holds us, overcome our fears or hurdles that keeps us apart from God and try our best to come close to Him.

Continuing with the gospel reading, Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way. ([Mk 10:51-52](#)). Then, at this point Jesus asks him what it is that he truly wants. We will note that God knows our hearts desire, and yet He will ask what we really wanted Him to do for us. Because oftentimes, we do not necessarily want to know how things truly are and we don't really know what exactly we wanted from God. In our prayers, we are reminded that it is not a self-centered monologue of our petitions and requests, but, prayer should be a God-centered dialogue. From our dialogue with God, as what Jesus says to Bartimaeus, "Go your way!" He does not say, "come!" And Bartimaeus freely chooses to follow Jesus. Yes, the decision still rest upon us either to go on with our old ways or to abandon our old self and embrace His invitation to follow Him. May Bartimaeus' prayer be ours too: "[Jesus, son of David, have pity on us and may the Lord help us to see clearly.](#)"

Our LBS's connection for the 30th Sunday is that "[Faith leads us to see...](#)," with a collective call to action to '[search our heart and answer this question from Jesus "what do you want me to do for you?" or ask someone to think about and answer this question as well](#)'

Please note that we are still having our LBS online through Zoom Video Conferencing (ID:320027131; PW:7NQKV6)

Celebrating All Saints Day on Sunday, October 31

**Finding Meaning, Hopes and Blessings in Baptism Name
(Teachers Caroline, Lavinna, Benedicta and Regina)**

Sunday, October 31, Level 2A, the children celebrated All Saints' Day. It was eye-opening for many kids to get to learn more about their Baptism name. They were made aware that their Baptism name holds their parents' hopes and blessings for them.



They also learned about the lives of the Saints, their life journey and what they are patrons of. During the class we played games to make it interactive and engaging when the kids learnt and shared different saints' life. They took turns to introduce the Saint in their Baptism name.

Some kids found it very interesting when learning the meaning behind their baptism name. All these Saints are leading a very holy and meaningful life through helping many people and serving God. By knowing this, the kids were also inspired to lead a life as how their Saints' life journey.



ENGLISH



SUNDAY



SCHOOL



CLASS
ACTIVITIES



Starting a New Life Abroad

By: Raymond Tam

Gen 2:18-24 In today's first reading (27th Sunday in Ordinary Time), the church reminded us of the relationship between men and women. Most of us will put our emphasis on relationships. However, this reading does give me another meaning towards our journey on earth.

When our Lord presented Adam with the woman He created with Adam's rib, Adam said, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! This one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken". From the words in the bible, we can feel the happiness and excitement of Adam. Reading through the Genesis further, when the woman, being seduced by the snake, gave Adam the fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden in which the Lord has expressly mentioned they should not eat, touch or they will be under pain of death (**Gen 3:3**), Adam started to blame the woman.

This is exactly what we all face in the world today. Whenever something new comes to our lives, we feel excited and are full of happiness. We see everything in front of us as perfect. However, when things turned out not to be as perfect as what we see in our plans, we started to query and blame ourselves, our neighbours or even God, as to whether we have made a wrong decision.

In the last couple of months, many of our parishioners, like me, have migrated to another country for a new life. I believe what we have in our mind when we were planning the move were perfect, we can start a new life, we can adopt to the new culture, the new language and the new surroundings. However, as most of us started to settle in, we all might encounter different difficulties. For example, the barriers of language, the convenience of being able to get whatever we need around the clock in Hong Kong, the difficulties we face when we are renting a place to stay, the opening of bank accounts, looking for jobs... etc. This is exactly what Adam feels when he first saw the woman created with his ribs and the moment he found himself naked as the woman gave her the piece of fruit from the tree where God forbade them to eat. There is always a big contrast between our ideal plans and the reality.

It is going to be winter soon. Many of us, who have spent most of our lives in a tropical region, may face further difficulties in coping with the freezing weather, no matter we are in the UK or Canada. During this difficult time of our lives, living in extreme weather below 0°C, together with all other difficulties we might face, we shall not lose faith in God, just like Moses leading his group of people out of Egypt. We shall remember that whatever God has created and installed in our lives are all perfect. He will help and guide us. Difficulties are there to make us learn to be strong and face further difficulties we might face in the future. I encourage all of you to read this piece of scripture from Deuteronomy, pray and get inspirations from God when are in situation where we have no clue.

"The land that you are crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, a land that the Lord your God looks after. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul— then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill". (**Deuteronomy 11:11-15**)

Baptism (October 1)



Sunday Best Bible Study (Every Saturday)



Acceptance to the Order of Catechumenate on Mission Sunday (October 24)



Jian with Godfather



Blessing of the Bible



Receiving the Bible

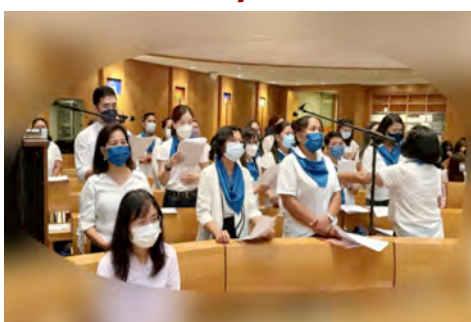
Money & Family Financial Education Seminar for Migrants (October 17,24,31)



Bethany Choir



During Practice (Every Sunday)



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

Introduction



"What if I wake up one morning, after decades of convent life, and realize I was mistaken?" I voiced out this sentiment to Fr. Restie Esguerra, my spiritual director when he asked me what was my greatest fear in saying 'yes' to what I perceived was a religious calling. And he very wisely said, "Come on now, you know very well that if it is a real love relationship between God and you, then it is meant to grow. Will it mature, will it break down, you cannot determine that now. There will surely be signs along the way. The important thing is to be honest with God, with yourself, with others."

It has been over forty years since this conversation took place. And I can honestly say, my faith-hope-love relationship with God has grown and continues to grow. Big and small crises cross my path but the journey continues. I consider the tears shed in the midst of these crises as water of nourishment that allowed the relationship to mature and blossom.

One may ask, *"but are there still persons interested in knowing about religious life?"* My answer is "yes" and this comes from my recent experiences. From December 2017 to August 2018, I had the blessing to do part time pastoral ministry with the English-speaking and Filipino communities in the Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Wanchai, Hong Kong. Without knowing it, four persons who assisted me in this pastoral ministry were searchers or 'discerners.' I sensed something in them, their desire to journey into the depths of their heart and discover what is God's design for them. We shared about this desire, inspired each other as we read the signs that came along the way. Three of them are now undergoing religious formation in the Philippines and one is continuing his priestly formation in Rome.

Hence, even if this is not a timely topic for most people, I believe that narratives of this kind could still serve as a simple compass to fellow pilgrim searchers. To them and to all those who have journeyed and continue to journey with me, I dedicate this love story.

To Be Continued.....