

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

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FEB
2022

THE HOMESTEAD



Let's Ride Tigers

By: Deacon Alex Kwok

According to the Chinese Zodiac, this is the year of the Tiger. Chinese are enchanted by this feline for several reasons. First of all, the stripe pattern on its forehead looks like the Chinese character “king 王”. Secondly, the movements of this huge and ferocious predator are majestic. Moreover, it always hunts alone. That is why the Chinese

idiom goes, “A mountain is unable to house two tigers 一山不能藏二虎”, suggesting its sovereignty is exclusive, like kings. Another idiom goes further to liken harsh governments to ferocious tigers 苛政猛於虎. Therefore, in the Chinese mind, tigers are the genuine “king of the jungle”, not lions.

All cultures are equal before challenges and difficulties. Perhaps that's the reason why both the English language and the Chinese language have a nearly identical idiom in describing perilous situations from which it is dangerous to run away, viz. “He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount 騎虎難下”. In English, a similar idea is expressed as “to have a tail by the tail”.

However, similarity stops here. Each culture has established different strategies to handle dangerous situations. To begin with, why does anyone want to ride a tiger? In Chinese, an idiom goes “In the company of the king is in the proximity of a tiger 伴君如伴虎”. Despite the risks, who does not want to get near the king in order to inflate one's power and wealth? So, what are the rules of engagement with the king so that one may get away without being bitten?

Since we are still within the season of Lunar New Year, allow me not to quote the Bible but a Chinese classic “I-Ching 易經”, aka “The Book of Changes” to illustrate the Chinese ways.



Continued on Page 2

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Pastoral

Let's Ride Tigers (cont'd from Page 1)

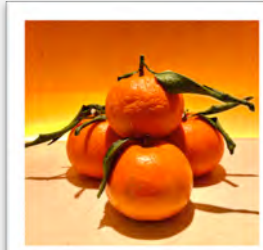
I-Ching is the paramount of Chinese philosophy enshrouded in oracles. From *I-Ching*, western mathematicians have developed binary arithmetic which is the foundation of modern computers. In Chinese culture, *I-Ching* inspires all branches of knowledge, from the art of war to medicine, and from eating to tripod-making. Among the Sixty-Four Oracles expounded in *I-Ching*, the tenth oracle calls up a curious imagery. The tenth oracle is labelled “Li 履” which means “a shoe” and by extension, “to walk” or “to step on”. Oracle “Li” reads: “*Stepping on a tiger's tail, it does not turn around to bite. No obstacle ahead.* 履虎尾，不咥人，亨。” You may wonder how it is possible for the tiger not to bite. Is the tiger asleep or perhaps dead? No! It turns out that the word “Li” sounds the same as “禮” which roughly means “*showing respect, having proper manners, following appropriation rules etc.*” Therefore, the tenth oracle is an oracle exhorting caution, perseverance, prudence and proper procedures with which one is able to tread on a tiger's tail without incurring any harm. These are the rules of engagement with a king, aka Tiger!

Brethren! Jesus Christ our king is not a tiger but the Good Shepherd. In our stead, He takes upon Himself all the bites of sin which are supposed to sink on us. Let us share a rightful portion to ride and beat up the tiger of sin like the legendary hero Wu Song 武松 by putting into practices the advice from the Li Oracle: Practise caution, perseverance, prudence and proper manners to avoid the tiger's bites of sin. Happy Chinese New Year. God bless!

Distributing lai-see (Lucky \$\$)



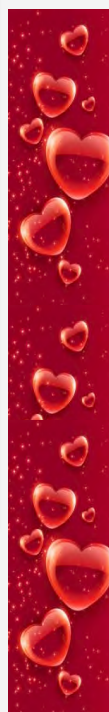
Distributing tangerines (Gold)



ONLINE MASS



Owing to the deterioration of the pandemic situation in Hong Kong, public Mass is once again suspended effective from February 2022. It is back to Online Mass broadcasted live, until further notice.



14 Feb 2022

For God
SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS
ONLY
BEGOTTEN
SON SO
THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES
IN HIM SHALL
HAVE EVERLASTING
Life

John 3:16

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Pastoral

Lunar New Year: Time To Be Renewed And To Give Thanks

By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM



As I continue my missionary experience in OLMC Parish, I also come to learn more of the Chinese culture, particularly the practices of the Hong Kong people. I come to realize, for instance, how the Lunar New Year is closely connected to renewal, rebirth or re-starting all over again.

Of course, there's the renewal of nature that gives us the hint as to the significance of this grand annual event. The new moon of spring comes early here in the East. And with this season come the blooms, the colors, the fragrance. I used to wonder why the people here are all rushing to buy flowers for the Lunar New Year, why they flock to the flower market, why there is usually the big event of the flower show at Victoria Park around this time. Now I know better. The flower show this year is suspended again because of the ongoing pandemic, but that is not a problem at all. The Hong Kong parks have been re-decorated with blooms; there is color and life around us notwithstanding the seemingly grim reality we are grappling with.

With this renewal comes also the sense of gratitude. We thank God for the new lease of life, for the chance to start all over again. The gospel of the Lunar New Year Mass is taken from the Prologue of St. John (see Jn 1:1-14). It reads, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... Through him all things were made." This, I believe is the source of our gratitude; that every new beginning for us is replete with the presence of God, his Word and his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the light that shines in the darkness, even the darkness that many people are experiencing now because of the persistent peril of the pandemic.

As we confront the unexpected and even undesirable experiences that the present situation forces us to accept, may the Lord grant us in this New Year, a renewed spirit of hope and especially the gift of peace in our hearts and in our homes. Come what may, we open our lives to the blessings hidden within the challenges that come our way. May we embrace fully God's gift of life, may we always seek to protect it and to protect the life of everyone around us.

Mary, our Lady of Mount Carmel and Health of the Sick, pray for us all!



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Community

Fai Chun (揮春): Traditional Chinese New Year Messages of Joy

By: Katherine Yu

To prepare for the arrival of the Year of the Tiger, OLMC organized a fai chun (揮春) couplets calligraphy writing event over two Sundays prior to Chinese New Year.

Led by Fr. Joseph Tham, LC, joined by Josephine Yue and myself, the event has successfully raised funds for the formation of seminarians and priests in Rome. Fr. Tham is a medical doctor, a Priest and a Professor of Legionaries of Christ. He is proficient in arts and is particularly well-versed in Chinese paintings and different styles of Chinese calligraphy writing. Fr. Tham resides in Rome, is in Hong Kong for a short vacation and is also hosting a Regnum Christi Art Salon at the Fringe Club.

During the event at OLMC, there were many “special requests” for Fr. Tham to prepare fai chun in traditional calligraphy writing using 4 different styles, i.e. seal script (篆書), clerical script (隸書), semi-cursive script (行書) and cursive script (草書).

OLMC friends made offerings when they made their fai chun requests. All tables and chairs in the church lobby were covered by fai chun & couplets, entailing wishes for fortune, blessings and peace from God – “wishing you 福你”; “auspicious 吉祥”; “million blessings 萬福”; “Lord bestow peace 主賜平安” and many many more.

We wish our OLMC friends will be filled with God’s love and blessings throughout the Year of the Tiger!



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English Sunday School

Jesus Calming the Sea (based on Mk 4:37-41)

By: Teachers Jovita, Enric and Joanne - Class 1A

A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

The children were asked to draw a picture of himself / herself with Jesus on a boat. They also included their parents / friends / others they wish to take with them on the boat with Jesus. Just sharing some pictures for inspiration.



Today's situation in Hong Kong can be compared to a storm in the sea. Let us not lose hope, but keep our eyes on Jesus. If Jesus was able to calm the storm in the sea, he would also calm the storms in life, especially when we call on him!



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Pope Francis' Lenten Message

Sow Seeds of Goodness

Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all" (Gal 6:9-10)

The following is an extract of Pope Francis' Lenten message:

Lent is a favourable time for personal and community renewal, as it leads us to the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For our Lenten journey in 2022, we will do well to reflect on Saint Paul's exhortation to the Galatians: "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity (kairós), let us do good to all" (Gal 6:9-10).



1. Sowing and Reaping

The first to sow is God himself, who with great generosity "continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family". Saint Paul points to the close relationship between sowing and reaping when he says: "Anyone who sows sparsely will reap sparsely as well, and anyone who sows generously will reap generously as well" (2 Cor 9:6). When we sow for the benefit of others, we share in God's own benevolent love. The word of God tells us that the real harvest is eschatological, the harvest of the last, undying day. Jesus himself uses the image of the seed that dies in the ground in order to bear fruit as a symbol of the mystery of his death and resurrection (cf. Jn 12:24);

2. Let us not grow tired of doing good

The Lenten season calls us to place our faith and hope in the Lord (cf. 1 Pet 1:21), since only if we fix our gaze on the risen Christ (cf. Heb 12:2) will we be able to respond to the Apostle's appeal, "Let us never grow tired of doing good" (Gal 6:9). *Let us not grow tired of praying.* Jesus taught us to "pray always without becoming weary" (Lk 18:1). We need to pray because we need God.

3. If we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time

Each year during Lent we are reminded that "goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day" (ibid., 11). Let us believe firmly that "if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time" and that, with the gift of perseverance, we shall obtain what was promised (cf. Heb 10:36), for our salvation and the salvation of others (cf. 1 Tim 4:16).

May the Virgin Mary, who bore the Saviour in her womb and "pondered all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:19), obtain for us the gift of patience. May she accompany us with her maternal presence, so that this season of conversion may bring forth fruits of eternal salvation.

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Living Rosary Group

Prayers Are Powerful: Let Us Pray Together

PRAYER TO OBTAIN GOOD HEALTH

Divine Holy Spirit, Creator and Renewer of all things, Life of my life, with Mary most holy, I adore you, I thank you, I love you!

You give life and vivify the whole universe.

Preserve me in good health;

free me from the illnesses, which threaten it and all the evils, which endanger it.

Assisted by your grace, I promise to always use my energies for the glory of God,

for the good of my soul, and in the service of my brothers and sisters.

I pray that you may illumine all doctors and those who care for the sick

with your gifts of knowledge and understanding, so that they may know the true causes of the ills, which endanger and threaten life,

and may discover and apply the most effective remedies to defend life and heal it.

Virgin Most Holy, Mother of life and Health of the sick, to you I entrust this humble prayer of mine.

Mother of God and our Mother, design to increase its value

with your powerful intercession. Amen. Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all" (Gal 6:9-10)

God, help!

HEALING PRAYER

Eucharistic Lord, You invite all who are burdened to come to You. Allow Your healing Hand to heal me. Touch my soul with Your compassion for others; touch my heart with Your courage and infinite Love for all; touch my mind with Your Wisdom, and may my mouth always proclaim Your praise. Touch me to reach out to You in all my needs, and help me to lead others to You by my example. Most loving Heart of Jesus, bring me health in body and spirit that I may serve You with all my strength.

Touch gently this life, which You have created, now and forever. Amen.

OUR LADY
OF LOURDES

February 11th



THE COMFORTER HAS COME

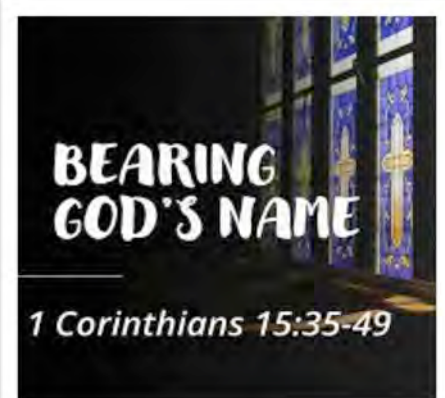
JOHN 16:7

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LBS Corner

Our Attitude

Reference liturgical readings from the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C): Gospel *Luke 6:27-38*; 1st Reading *1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,22-23*; 2nd Reading *1 Corinthians 15:45-49*



The readings showcased a contrasting attitude of man and God. In the 1st reading from the book of the prophet Samuel, we read that Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel to search for David. So, David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him. Abishai whispered to David: "God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!" But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD's anointed and remain unpunished?" Abishai represents the attitude of man towards his enemy, while David on the other hand represents the attitude of God to His people whether he is good or bad,

This same attitude of God shown by David to Abishai is found in the gospel reading. Jesus taught us to love our enemy, do good to those who hate us. We know that the teaching of Jesus during those days goes way beyond the Jewish law. The latter says, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." When someone hurts you, you have to proportionately hurt the person in return. This is the way of our world today, is it not? If you have an enemy, ignore him / her and do not even bother to communicate at all and find ways how to gain revenge or retaliate. Jesus' teaching is quite radical: love our enemy, not only those who love us. Do good to those who hurt us. Who are the enemies mentioned in the gospel? Those who: hate us, curse us, treat us badly, slap us, take our possessions. Knowing the attitudes of our enemies, still we are reminded by Jesus to..."*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*"

Our LBS' connection for this 7th Sunday is that "*Since we bear the image of God, we are capable of loving our enemies and God will reward us for our acts of justice and faithfulness.*" Our collective call to action is to '*pray for God's grace to help us forgive and love our enemies.*'

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

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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 4)

discerning heart



I have spoken about the significant events that contributed to the growth of this relationship. But here comes now the more difficult part: the detachment that this attraction required of me.

Many times during the vocation discernment process, I questioned God: “You commanded me to love my father and mother, why would you want me to leave them now in order to serve you?” I was actually a very family-centered person. I love my Mom and Dad very much, as well as my seven siblings. I am the second of a brood of eight, and being the eldest daughter, I also enjoyed the role of ‘surrogate mother’ to my brothers and sisters. That role shaped me, knowingly or unknowingly, as I took on the responsibility of being the model child, sibling, student, care provider, protector, etc. The first time I revealed to my Dad this persistent feeling of my being called to enter the convent, I remember how he cried quietly. And my Mom questioned me later why I had to hurt my Dad’s feelings that way. She reminded me how she and my Dad have been lenient to me all the way, allowing me unlimited time and freedom to serve our parish church in Santolan, Pasig. Both of them asked “What else do you want? Why can you not fulfill your desire of serving God doing the things as you have always done?”

I honestly didn’t know how to answer that question. Hence, I put it before God. “What do you really want from me? Why do I need to leave my beloved parents and family in order to serve you?” In addition to this objection, I told God outright how much I would like to have children of my own! I remember vividly how this desire reverberated in my heart in one of my quiet moments at the University chapel in U.P. Diliman. It was so strong I had to talk to the chaplain to calm me down. And his reply was a simple encouragement to continue praying about it and to trust that God can never be outdone in generosity. “When he asks us to sacrifice something, we can be sure that the graces will be overflowing in return,” he said. I listened to him, barely understanding what he meant.

I live with these uncertainties throughout my college years, while paying attention to the signs of God’s presence and the possible answers to my questions. I also had my admirers and male friends who showed me the possibility of a promising married life but I just felt that my heart was ‘already taken.’ I have to honestly find out for myself what God wanted from me.

Then at a certain point in time, I ‘heard’ God’s answer deep in my heart: “Your parents are my collaborators in your birth and growth. They have taken care of you very well, they will receive their reward. But you belong to me. I am your real parent.” Such a strong and clear answer that gradually gave me peace, notwithstanding the great pain I felt in the thought of leaving them. I told God sincerely, “I want to obey you but I still don’t know how...please show me the way.”

And he did. That invitation to attend the discernment retreat in Antipolo the first weekend of May 1978, after my college graduation, was the concrete sign. I remember well during the second day of that retreat, after receiving all the ‘signs’ I asked from the Lord, I still tried to set up my last show of resistance: “Lord, what if I just say ‘no?’ What if I simply admit that your call is too much for me, will you still love me?” Did I receive an answer? You bet I did! It resounded at the very depths of my heart: “I love you just the same; my love for you will not change one bit.”

Overwhelmed, I decided this is the kind of love I seek. I was completely conquered!
(To be continued.....)

Lent starts on 2 Mar 2022
Prayer – Fasting – Almsgiving



OLMC Main Page
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OLMC Page for English Speaking
Parishioners on Facebook



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

