



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

Spring Edition

APR-MAY

2023

THE HOMESTEAD

HE IS RISEN, ALLELUIA!

This year, Holy Week runs from 2 April to 8 April, and the Easter season of the Liturgical Calendar runs from 9 April to 28 May.

Catholics observe Easter in different stages. Easter Sunday is the greatest Sunday of the year, and it marks the start of the "Easter Octave," or the eight days that stretch from the first to the second Sunday of Easter (also known as Divine Mercy Sunday). The Church celebrates each of these eight days as Solemnities of the Lord - a direct extension of Easter Sunday.

The entire Easter season lasts 50 days, and includes the Solemnity of the Ascension of Christ, which falls on the 40th day of Easter (26 May). It ends with Pentecost, which is derived from the Greek word "pentecoste," meaning "50th", when the Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles, Mary, and the first followers of Christ.

May you all have a blessed and happy Easter!



COMING UP IN JUNE

Church Renovations => Revised Mass Schedules



We Are Easter People!

By: Deacon Alex Kwok

When Catholics meet in the Easter Season, we greet each other “*The Lord is Risen, Alleluia. The Lord is Truly Risen, Alleluia!*” The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our Catholic faith which guides our words and deeds in our daily life. Therefore, we are Easter People. We should be living up the spirit of Easter.

Some people think that Jesus Christ is merely a founder among many founders of global religions. He teaches believers to do good and to love each other without discrimination, etc. There is nothing outstanding about his teachings which attempt to be universal and to embrace all peoples without distinction. But when we look at the core of Jesus’ teachings, namely the **Beatitudes**, they go against the flow of the society. Who in his decent mind wants to be poor in a commercial society, to be mournful when life is already so stressful, to be meek and be bossed around, to desire righteousness when we want to gain just a little extra-money for the future, to be merciful in a cut-throat work-place, to be clean of heart without plan B, to be peacemakers and lose the opportunity to gain advantages and to be trodden down by others who climb up the corporal ladder? No way!

However, all these beatific attitudes of life are made possible and sensible because the Teacher of this wisdom has defeated death and proves to be right! St. Paul says well, “*If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, your faith*” (1 **Corinthians 15:14**). And he elaborates more, “*If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all*” (1 **Corinthians 15:19**)! Indeed, if we bet our money on horse-racing tips by someone who has never won before, we are truly pitiable. A fool and his money soon part! But our Lord came down from heaven, died, buried, resurrected and ascended into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father! Therefore, His teachings go beyond this life on earth.

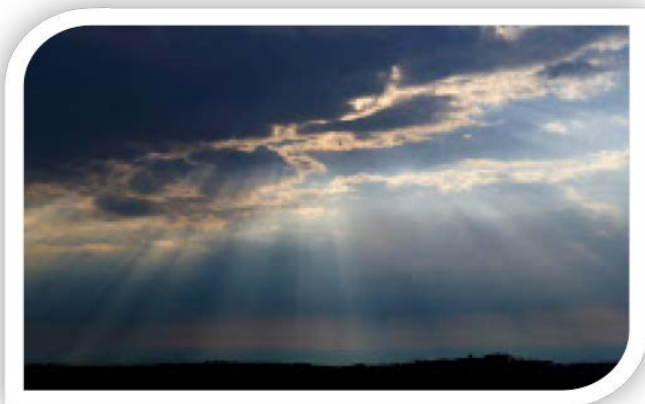
Christ’s resurrection opens the gate to a life beyond this worldly life which ends in death. Suddenly, we discover a whole new world in which the norms and values at present no longer apply. For now, people need to stockpile food and resources for all eventualities in the future. However, if the future is eternal, they need food and resources that are eternal too! In the present world, we cannot afford to be meek but to be assertive, to be strong and to take control in order to be successful. However, we are unable to be assertive, strong and take control forever in eternal life because God is there. In the present world, we decide what is good and right, evil and wrong. But we cannot decide who will stay in heaven with us. If we are not merciful, forgiving and be peace-makers now, how shall we be able to endure to live **forever** in paradise with somebody whom we hated and were unable to forgive on earth and yet God assigns him a place next to us?

But you might complain that it is next to impossible to practise Beatitudes in our daily life. We are not the Son of God and are too fragile to practise the Beatitudes like Jesus does, particularly in His Passion. He practises poverty (He was stripped) so that the others (the soldiers) might be richer; to mourn for the destruction of Jerusalem; to be meek and restrained when He was able to summon legions of angels to resist arrest; to hunger and thirst for God’s deliverance when He cried out “*Eli, eli, lema sabachthani*” (**Matthew 27:46**); to

forgive those who crucified him; to obey the Father’s will and gave up Plan-B; to reconcile God and sinners on the cross and to suffer crucifixion for the salvation of all. His resurrection nullifies all previous sufferings and the Son of Man has the last laugh over Satan! Sorry Brethren! Have you not received the sacraments, in particular, the Holy Eucharist? The Son of God and we are one. Then how are we unable to practise the Beatitudes?

Brethren! Let us live as Easter People here and now. Let us live up the spirit of Beatitudes day in and day out. Let us greet each other, “*The Lord is truly risen and resides in us. Alleluia!*”





Rising with Jesus in Daily Life

By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

The stories of the resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels testify that it is not easy to capture the meaning of this life-changing event. You can read the narratives in all four gospels namely in Mt 28, Mk 16, Lk 24 and Jn 20-21 and you will see the common thread: the disciples struggled to recognize the Lord, and to believe that he is truly risen.

The difficulty is understandable: the resurrection is outside of our common human experience. The late Pope Benedict XVI writes in his book *Jesus of Nazareth, "The Resurrection accounts certainly speak of something outside our world of experience. They speak of something new, something unprecedented -- a new dimension of reality that is revealed."*

So let us console each other if we ourselves are still struggling to understand this great mystery of our faith. What I can suggest here is that we can perhaps 'exercise the eyes of faith' not only during this Easter season but in our daily life. We can start by trying to see the signs of connection between our life here and the other 'dimension' of reality.

I personally think that even here and now "resurrection experiences" are creatively woven in the texture of our life, if we only TAKE and MAKE TIME to examine deeply our daily lives. I invite you to look at signs of connections between heaven and earth, for instance, the stunning play of clouds and light as in the picture above (like God "showing off" or simply smiling); or marvel at the tiny green sprouts of plants springing from crevices or stones. Or exercise it in our interpersonal relationships like offering a word of hope to someone, giving an encouraging tap on the shoulder of someone who is downcast, offering him or her a listening ear, a helping hand, a smile. I believe that there are so many challenging instances in our daily lives when our patience and compassion are called forth; these are in fact the moments when we can 'practice and exercise' our resurrection faith.

Let me end with another quote from Pope Benedict taken from the book mentioned above: *"Throughout the history of the living, the origins of anything new have always been small, practically invisible and easily overlooked. (...) In terms of world history, Jesus' Resurrection is improbable; it is the smallest mustard seed of history. This reversal of proportions is one of God's mysteries. The great -- the mighty-- is ultimately the small. The tiny mustard seed is something truly great. So it is that the Resurrection has entered the world only through certain mysterious appearances to the chosen few. And yet it was truly the new beginning for which the world was silently waiting."*

As I wish everyone a blessed and happy Easter, I pray that we may truly be capable of exercising in our lives these 'daily Easter experiences' to strengthen our faith and to faithfully witness to the reality that Jesus is truly risen and that his Spirit accompanies us in the journey of life! Alleluia!



EASTER

THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

English Sunday School

Participating in Stations of the Cross

By: Pia Quinsay (Student)

This Lenten season, my brothers and I attended the stations of the Cross for the first time. I usually carry the cross to each station during the event while my brothers accompanied me with their candles. Some days I would help in reading the stations with other kids.

I felt like this experience was good for me since I connected more with God. I became more thankful for Jesus and his sacrifices for us. Learning Jesus died for our sins made me a bit sad knowing he went through all of that for us but at the end of the day I am still extremely grateful for it. Overall I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to participate in the Stations of the Cross with my family.



Easter Activities

The children made prayer books, containing some basic Catholic prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be) and also some gratitude prayers and daily prayers for family, friends, and their own petitions. Here are some photos on them in action!

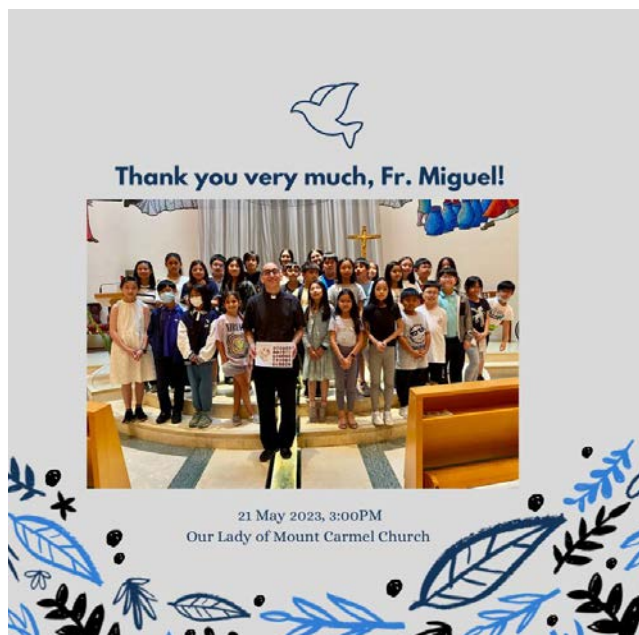


THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

English Sunday School

Recollection of children preparing for confirmation and first communion (21 May)

Guide: Fr. Miguel Diez



Let us pray for these adorable children!

Our Lady Of Mount Carmel
English Sunday School

Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit!



Reception of the Sacraments of
Confirmation and
First Holy Communion

28 May 2023, 1:30pm mass



Our Lady Of Mount Carmel
English Sunday School

Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit!



Reception of the Sacraments of
Confirmation and
First Holy Communion

11th June 2023, 1:30pm mass



THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

Holy Week

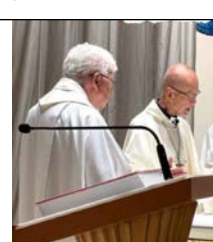
Palm Sunday (2 April)



Maundy Thursday (6 April)



If I therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet (John 13:14)



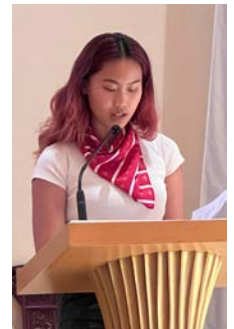
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Holy Week

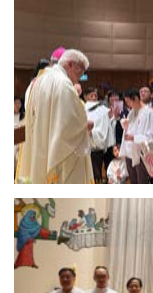
Good Friday (7 April)



Stations of the Cross (7 April)



Easter Vigil (8 April)



Baptism by
Submersion!

We are all Catholics. Congratulations.
Welcome to the family Neophytes!

THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

Holy Week

Easter Sunday (9 April)



Sacraments

Confirmation (21 May)

Faith 'Re-Set'

By: Simon Nevado

During my confirmation day last 21 May 2023 in our OLMC Parish Church, I felt like something inside me was ignited. It was as if the Holy Spirit reset my faith and made it more powerful than ever before. I am now seeing my faith in a different light and I owe this transformation to the guidance and teaching of Fr.

Thomas Law and Sr. Victoria Victorino. Their patience, wisdom and kindness have been instrumental in helping me find my path with Jesus. Thank you for being my inspiration and true examples of what it means to live a life of faith and service.



We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)



THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

Liturgical Bible Study

LBS Corner: “Encounter”

[Reference liturgical readings for 3rd Sunday of Easter (Year A): Gospel (**Luke 24:13-35**); 1st reading (**Acts 2:14, 22-33**); 22nd reading (**1 Peter 1:17-21**)]

In our modern day and time, did anyone of us meet or encounter Jesus? People who met Him are changed. Those who really encounter Jesus, our risen Lord, they become a changed person. What about us?

Our gospel reading tells us when *two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. As they were busy conversing and debating, they did not notice Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?"* (**Lk 24:13-19a**).

In response, they now started to say everything about Jesus as they were talking to the person who is now risen, but in their mind was still dead. Jesus did not chase after them, instead He met and encountered them along the way amidst their misunderstanding of his resurrection. *And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures* (**Lk 24:25-26**).

As Jesus is the light of the world, he enlightened them as well as everyone. Physically, all of us need the light of the sun so we can see, while spirituality, we need faith for us to be enlightened. We experience such enlightenment and the encounter along the road to Emmaus with the Lord through the liturgical readings. Like the disciples at Emmaus, we can ask ourselves, “Are our hearts burning during the liturgy of the word? We do not only listen to the reader, but we listen to our heart because the priest is not talking to our ears, it is the Holy Spirit that speaks to our heart. The same spirit in us from our baptism and confirmation makes the words from the scriptures alive when we listen to it as we gather as a congregation on Sundays. This is the moment we have been doing as Catholics until now, in this privileged moment to encounter the Lord.

The other encounter with the Lord is in the breaking of the bread. *As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.* (**Lk 24:28-30**). The breaking of the bread is the weekly encounter we are having with the Lord as we participate in the liturgy of the Holy Eucharist when the priest says...*the night before He died and went willingly to His passion, he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it.* We recognize His real presence when we kneel or put our right hand over our heart, we acknowledge and proclaim in our heart and mind that this is Jesus alive in the eucharist. This is so important in our faith, the breaking of the bread and our communion with Jesus.

With our weekly encounter with Jesus through the Sunday mass, we are transformed and become different as we live the word and let our heart continue to burn with the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. We try to be vigilant, to be on the lookout for an encounter with Jesus. He actually searches for us. He seeks us out one by one, searching our hearts. Vigilance is being receptive to the wisdom that will help us discern Jesus' presence and truly find and encounter Him. Sometimes our Lord passes by our side and we don't even see Him; or sometimes we mistakenly think 'we know Him so well' that we don't recognize Him like the two disciples. Our vigilance is the prayerful attitude that makes us want to keep Him with us when He seems to want to 'continue on His way.'*

Our Prayer: Stay with us O Lord in our every encounter with You. Help us increase your goodness within our hearts. Grant us vigilance to help us recognize your real presence in the Holy Mass. May you be always by our side to help us share the good news and inspire others to persevere in encountering you in their lives.

1st Reading



2nd Reading



Gospel



THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

Living Rosary Group



Recollection in Macau with Fr. Manalo, SSP

By: Christine

I am honoured to have joined an inspiring recollection with Fr. Manalo, SSP together with members of the Living Rosary Group on 11 May at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Taipa, Macau. He presented to us our primary vocation to Holiness. For me, the whole reflection was like a 'marriage encounter' since he continued with the reflection on the secondary vocation which in my case refers to married life.

Marriage is God's blessing to two people to allow the relationship to be transformed into a 'holy family.' When my husband San and I first met, we had been through excitement and sadness of love, fatal pandemic and challenges connected to our respective extended families (pride and prejudice). At the end of 2019, against all odds, we decided to get married.

After the sacred matrimony, we came to our new challenge - children. I experienced losing 'hope' at times during pregnancy or even after giving birth to baby Anna. I felt 'negative' at some moments of those period. However, there was always a voice from heaven; I believe it was God's voice consoling me. I constantly kept praying that God will guide me in this difficult moment. Indeed we need to have perseverance and patience even as we listen to God's voice.

The journey to Holiness for me is not an individual journey. I understand now that I am not alone in this path. I am grateful that my husband San now spends more time on me and my daughter, instead of his work. He fully supports me to join the church. I have to say having him back in 'God's place' for our family is such a fabulous thing in life!

I praise the Lord and thank him for this vocation to Holiness.



THE HOMESTEAD – SPRING EDITION

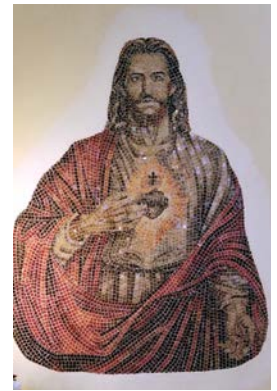
Living Rosary Group

Recollection in Macau with Fr. Manalo, SSP (cont'd)

By: Mary

The reflection by Fr. Manalo, SSP was both inspiring and uplifting to my soul. I was blessed with this opportunity to be drawn into a more intimate relationship with my God who loves us and is calling us all to a life of "holiness". I pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten and empower me to be able to hear His soft promptings especially at times when I am lost and disconnected in the midst of my pains and frustrations.

My thanks to Sr. Victoria for organizing such a fruitful retreat. God bless!.



Pentecost (28 May) - Marking the End of the Easter Octave

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim **(Acts 2:1-4)**

This is the day that the church was born. On that day, the Spirit of God descended on the 120 followers of Jesus and they started speaking out loud in languages from around the world. This created such a commotion that thousands who were in Jerusalem at the time came out to see what was happening and in front of the gathering crowd, Peter spoke the first gospel message and “those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day” **(Acts 2:41)**. The number of gospel followers has been growing continually ever since that Pentecost Sunday.

During the 11:45am Mass, Fr. Law asked for the 1st Reading and the Gospel reading to be done in various languages (English, Tagalog, Cebuano, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish) so that the congregation could understand and appreciate Pentecost to its fullest.



English Masses during Church Renovation (effective 24 June)

11:45 – St. Francis Canossian School
12:00 – OLMC Lobby
13:30 – OLMC Lobby
18:00 – OLMC Lobby

Divine Mercy Sunday (16 April)

Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) at OLMC



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OLMC Page for English Speaking Parishioners on Facebook



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

