



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

FEB
2024



THE HOMESTEAD



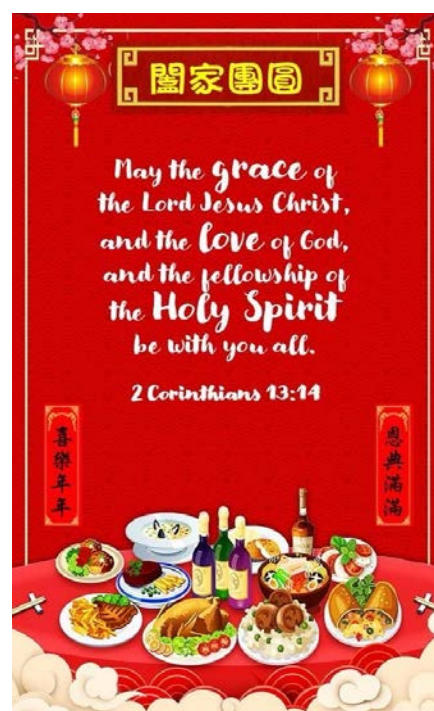
Happy Chinese New Year

Fr. Thomas Law wishes all parishioners a happy and peaceful Chinese New Year.

Peace is very important. When Pope Francis sent his lunar new year greetings, he invited everyone to pray for peace. In his words "Peace is not the responsibility of a few, but of the entire human family. Let us all cooperate to build it with gestures of compassion and courage".

On 10 February 2024, we will all celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Dragon. The dragon is a mystical animal that symbolizes strength, energy and vitality. In Cardinal Stephen Chow's lunar new year message, he mentioned that of all the 12 zodiac animals in the lunar calendar, the Chinese have a distinct liking for the dragon as the dragon represents extraordinary, outstanding and successful life. Dragon or not, Cardinal Chow expressed that Chinese New Year is a time of joyful greetings, blessings and reunions, especially for families and friends. Therefore he encouraged everyone to connect with their past and with their Chinese heritage.

Therefore, from our family at OLMC to your family - Have a blessed Year of the Dragon!





When We Feel Sick and Weak ...

By: Deacon Alex Kwok

In our younger days, life was hectic and vibrant because most of the things were under our control. We ate and drank whatever we fancied and were proud to be able to burn the midnight oil for several consecutive days without degrading our performances. We did not have to be careful with our life styles nor with people whom we made friends. However, we can enjoy those days no more. Today, we can easily catch flu, not to mention Covid-19. We topple or drop objects more often. Our knees begin to ache and shake uncontrollably. We start to suffer hangovers after only a few

only a few drinks and perhaps indigestions after consuming some fatty dishes. It takes longer for us to load our memories and start forgetting what to do with objects we are holding in our hands, or searching for the pair of spectacles we are grasping. Our sights are dimming; our living space is getting quieter and our teeth are falling off one by one. We begin to find ourselves lying in bed, watching the ceiling all the waking hours, losing count of evenings and mornings. We recognize the faces and voices of our loved ones no more. So many strangers come and go to spoon-feed us and change our diapers that we no longer know what embarrassment means. One day, spoon-feeding switches to tube feeding and people in coloured uniform have to force the air through our nostrils into our lungs lest we die of suffocation ... Agony turns into relief when suddenly you find yourself floating in mid-air, watching medicals professionally trying to resuscitate your corpse. Freed from constraints of your mortal body, all your memories, fond as well as painful ones, return vividly in a split second. It is time to say goodbye and to descend into a hot bath to purge us of our regrets ...

Being terminally ill is no uncharted-waters. Thanks to advancements in medical technologies, we know what it is and see it more often than in previous generations. Nowadays, the medical professionals are more capable of prolonging the life of the terminally ill even though the outcome is inevitable. In one sense, family members are lengthening the agony of their loved ones. On the other hand, they have more time to accompany the sick and to reconcile their relationships so that when the time of departure comes, everybody may bid each other farewell in peace. In fact, no living person has experienced death before. Therefore, the terminally ill are pathfinders. They leave impressions on their family members and all the people around them, including the medicals and carers, how to approach death in dignity or in helplessness. They may place themselves each day in the merciful hand of God and meet their day of departure without regret for what they leave behind and look forward to joining their loved ones on the day of resurrection. Or they may struggle in vain to ward off the horrors of death; may keep moaning or even cursing out of excruciating pains about the treatments they receive from carers, medicals, family members, visitors and even the clergy. Oh, may God have mercy on those souls!

Though paradoxical, it is indeed a blessing to be weak and sick. Most of our life, we are confident in ourselves and trust little in God. When we are sick as well as feeble and find nobody to rely on, only then shall we turn to our heavenly Father like the Prodigal Son. He will be more than happy to embrace us.

Beloved brethren! It is extremely painful for anybody, even for Jesus Christ, to suffer and die alone. If it be possible, spend time, even as short as half-an-hour, to visit and stay at the bed of the terminally ill, listening to their stories. On top of the medical treatment they receive, give them spiritual supports. Pray the Rosary with them or for them if you are unable to stay close. By the time they see our heavenly Father face to face, we will have one more guardian angel interceding for us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God. Pray for us sinners. Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

God bless!

Preparing for the Jubilee 2025

By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

I wonder if we are aware that we are living a very important moment in the life of the Church: 2024 is the 'vigil,' as it were, of the Ordinary Jubilee 2025. The proclamation of this event was done by Pope Francis on 11 February 2022. Pope Francis announced that the theme for the Jubilee is "Pilgrims of Hope." He expressed his desire that the coming Jubilee may "contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire."



It is good to be aware also of the Logo chosen for this Jubilee 2025. Inspired by the theme, the artist of the logo, Italian advertising artist, Giacomo Trivisani, explained that the cross is the primary symbol expressing our adherence to Christ as our anchor of life and hope. The four stylized figures embracing the cross and each other symbolize humanity from the four corners of the earth. The logo highlights the sense of solidarity and communion that we all need to develop as we face the turbulent waters of life and history, symbolized here by the choppy, underlying waves

As a further development in line with the celebration of the Jubilee, Pope Francis launched **2024 as the Year of Prayer** last **21 January 2024**. He encouraged everyone to deepen the life of prayer saying, "*How can we prepare for this event, so important for the life of the Church, if not through prayer?*"

Prayer is indeed our lifeline as people of God who journey on this earth. Prayer connects us to the Father, through Jesus, in the Spirit. Prayer expresses our concern for one another when we intercede for the needs of our brothers and sister. But to pray is not always that easy. Left to ourselves, we really do not know what to pray for. We are usually tossed in various directions because of our conflicting desires and lack of discernment. But there is no need to be discouraged. St. Paul reminds us: "*the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.*" (see **Romans 8:26-27**)

Here in our OLMC Parish, we are striving to make our Church a true 'space and school of prayer' where, as Pope Francis says, "*initiatives may increase so that each pilgrim may find an oasis of serenity and depart with a heart full of consolation.*"

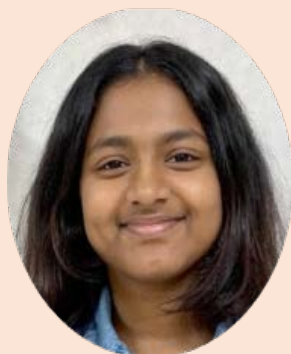
In the following months, as we celebrate the Lenten Season, we hope that the parishioners and pilgrims in our Church may experience the nearness of God in their lives, as well as the love and concern of our parish community. We pray, together with our Parish Priest and all of us serving you in this Parish, that we may be able to journey together as pilgrims of hope, encouraging and helping each other, especially in the challenging moments of our earthly journey.



The Heart of Serving Others



Hi, my name is Martin Yim. I have been attending Catechism Class since 2020. I received the Sacrament of Confirmation last year. Now, I continue to attend post-confirmation class to introduce us to concrete service in the church. Now I feel so happy and grateful to serve as one of the Lectors at the 6pm mass in our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.



Hi! My name is Antoinette Amolika. I just had my First Holy Communion and Confirmation last year. Right after I started serving by joining the Rabboni choir. This is a great experience; I get to go to church every week and have a purpose. Usually, I go to church with just my sister, but joining the choir has given me another family to be within the Church. As a part of the choir, I feel like making a difference and contributing to the church itself. It is amazing that I completed my Christian Initiation sacraments.

In the choir, I get to join choir events and sing to God and create memories. Even though I am not an experienced singer, they give me chances like singing the psalm and being a big part of the choir. This is a great opportunity overall. I am really grateful that I get to do this for the Lord. As a student, to be an active member in the Church is a great step up and an amazing responsibility which I cherish forever.



Hi! My name is Diya Evangeline Rajinikumar. I have been an active participant in this church for the past three years, engaging in activities and events. Being an altar server gives me joy and peace. I get to learn more things as an altar server. What I really like about being an altar server is meeting people and being part of a positive environment. If I make a mistake, the parish community helps me understand and improve. Like the times when I forget to give the priest his mask or forget to bow, etc. I get feedback which makes me motivated to do better. The environment makes me look forward to church celebrations. I deeply love the memories and remember the Lord's teachings.



"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Pet 4:10)

Heeding the Call: Embracing Holy Service

By: Emmanuel P. Calinao



In 2020, upon the recommendation of a friend, I learned of a Catholic church situated on Star Street. Intrigued by this suggestion, I ventured to the church, initially encountering difficulty in locating it within a residential and commercial complex. Nevertheless, my first visit proved to be a tranquil and intimate encounter to God, prompting me to subsequently attend Sunday masses.

It was around May 2021 when, after the Holy Mass, Sr. Victoria approached me and inquired if I am an organist or musician. In response, I cordially expressed that I was not an organist, but revealed that I did possess the ability to sing. Upon learning this, Sr. Victoria urged me to consider joining the Bethany Choir due to an identified need for male vocal participation. Although initially hesitant, I responded with the statement, "I cannot make a cannot make a decision at this moment, Sister; I require time for prayer and discernment." Despite my reservations, Sr. Victoria proceeded to introduce me to Nanay Melinda, the conductress of the choir.

Initially, I took on the role of observer and listener, attentively studying their rehearsal and vocal performances. With time however, I gradually transitioned to a more active role, offering guidance in proper vocal techniques, dynamics, voicing, and other related aspects. After dedicating years to teaching the Bethany Choir, I have observed significant improvement and notable progress among the participants. Witnessing this development inspired me to emphasize the importance of punctuality during rehearsals, stressing that singing proficiency encompasses more than vocal quality alone. I emphasized the significance of active listening, adherence to instructions, and, most importantly, discipline. Through the collaborative efforts of each member, a heightened sense of enthusiasm and dedication to musical learning was evident. The vibrant and inspiring spirit of the Bethany choir fills me with immense satisfaction. The commitment and joyful demeanor of our members, predominantly hailing from the Philippines, create a deeply enriching experience. In the embrace of our church community, overseas Filipino workers find not just a choir but a sanctuary - a second family that resonates with the warmth and love of home.

In conjunction with my involvement in music ministry, I recently seized an opportunity to participate actively in the celebration of the 100 years Foundation Anniversary of the PDDM Sisters at the Annunciation Church in Tsuen Wan last 15 January. This momentous event was presided by His Eminence Cardinal Stephen Chow Sau Yan S.J., the Bishop of Hong Kong. It was a profound blessing and honor to sing the Responsorial Psalm during the Eucharistic celebration. It was truly a memorable event for me since the PDDM sisters had played an influential role in my spiritual journey. My parents and I had been active participants in the music ministry established by these esteemed sisters at Paco Park Chapel under St. Vincent de Paul Parish (Manila).

In this present season, I find great fulfillment in my role as one the teachers within the Bethany Choir. Through this humble endeavor, I earnestly desire to inspire others to draw closer to our Lord through music. It is my fervent hope that our collective enthusiasm and commitment to serving in the Eucharistic celebration every Sunday will beckon others to join us in experiencing the presence of God. In this harmonious pursuit, I strive to perpetuate the eternal refrain of Psalm 89: ***"Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."***



By: Vivien Lee

OLMC parishioners may have come across the name Regnum Christi, a community that has been active in our parish and elsewhere in Hong Kong serving the needs of the local English speaking Catholic community.

Regnum Christi (Latin for “Kingdom of Christ”) is an international Catholic movement with some 30,000 members comprising four vocations - priests (Legionaries of Christ), consecrated men and women, and lay members. Fr. Joseph Tham LC, a Legionary priest who originates from Hong Kong, has been a familiar face at OLMC for more than a decade, giving talks on a wide range of spiritually engaging topics from bioethics to medieval art. As an accomplished Chinese artist and calligraphist, he has been seen often in the parish lobby around Chinese New Year time, holding workshops on festive calligraphy.

More recently, with the support of Fr. Thomas Law and Sr. Victoria Victorino PDDM, Regnum Christi has been able to offer more regular formation opportunities for our English speaking members. Last year, for example, their Hong Kong based spiritual director, Fr. Marco Cho LC, presented a series of talks on the integral spirituality of Lent and Easter, part of which took place in our parish. This coming Lent and Easter will see another formation series on offer. Their monthly weekday evening English mass, open to all, also takes place in our church. Beyond our parish, English speaking Hong Kong Catholics are also served by Regnum Christi activities such as themed retreats and pilgrimages abroad.

It was in our parish back in 2019 where ten men and women from Hong Kong and Macau were incorporated as lay members of Regnum Christi. They are a diverse group, including students, professionals and retirees. Amongst them are many familiar faces, active members of our parish community, serving on committees and ministries ranging from the one which assisted in our recent renovation, to the choir for the Friday bilingual and the Sunday 1:30 pm masses. Members actively and joyfully live their charism in service, pledging to live full and faithful apostolic lives - to love Christ, serve people and build the church. At its core is a Christ-centered spirituality that is lived together in communion with all members, in union with the whole Church, and through a mission to build the kingdom of Christ, as reflected in the motto “Thy Kingdom Come”.

[Note from Editor: If you are interested to join us, please contact Vivien Lee. Look for the Holy Family Choir and you will find her].



Fr. Joseph Tham, LC – a medical doctor, a Legionary priest, a professor of bioethics, and an artist of Chinese calligraphy, seals, and watercolor paintings. Theme: “Art for God”



Regnum Christi

THE HOMESTEAD – FEBRUARY 2024

Chinese New Year

The Spirit of Chinese New Year

Fai Chun (揮春) is a traditional decoration that is often used during Chinese New Year. Most Chinese like to put up fai chun(s) in their doorways to create elated festive atmospheres. The phrases written on a fai chun usually means good luck and prosperity. Fai chun is customarily written by hand, although it is now quite common to see mass-printed fai chun with cartoons and 3D words, especially during the period leading up to Chinese New Year. The tradition of fai chun started around 1,500 years ago, when they were charms carved out of peach wood in the shape of the gods guarding the gates to the underworld to ward off evil. The charms then evolved into red pieces of paper with new year's wishes, which are taped onto doors. The most popular one of all is probably fook (福), meaning 'good fortune', emblazoned on a diamond-shaped paper, which is often hung upside down to symbolise pouring the luck.

But calligraphers writing fai chun are a rare sight these days. To bring in the spirit of Chinese New Year, OLMC has arranged for the writing of fai chun (in both Chinese and English language) by volunteers who are also parishioners, to do this in OLMC's lobby for 3 Sundays before Chinese New Year. All donations received were given to charity.



Apart from fai chun, there were also temporary stalls setup at the entrance to OLMC, selling everything from cookies to Chinese New Year cakes. All proceeds also went to charity, and in OLMC's ongoing quest to help the homeless and the under-privileged. Though these other initiatives were run by the Chinese Mass parishioners, charity is charity, regardless of which group is in charge. Our objection is the same.

Happy Chinese New Year 2024



THE HOMESTEAD – FEBRUARY 2024

Living Rosary Group

The group was honoured to receive an invitation from Sr. Victoria Victorino and Sr. Regina Lito to attend the celebration of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Disciples of the Divine Master ("PDDM") Foundation [1924 – 2024] on 15 January 2024 at the Annunciation Church officiated by His Eminence Cardinal Stephen Chow. This was followed by a scrumptious lunch specially organized for the attendees.

Members of the Living Rosary Group would like to share their thoughts and gratitude for this wonderful day.

OLMC Rosary Jenny

@OLMC Sr Victoria Thank you for your invitation to the PPDM 100th Anniversary Mass and Lunch 🍴🍰 Very joyful and memorable celebration ❤️

15:10

OLMC Rosary Christine

Happy 100th anniversary of PDDM Sisters! Today's mass was very sacred and solemn. I especially included all of rosary sisters in my prayers 🙏

15:55

OLMC Rosary Carol

Thank you for having us at your centennial celebration, PDDM Sisters! We are honoured and blessed! Wishing you many more years of blessedness, love, & service! 🙏

16:00

OLMC Gemma

Congratulations to our PDDM sisters in celebrating their centennial anniversary today! Thank you for the guidance, love and support to our community esp to our rosary group. Best Wishes . God Bless ❤️🙏❤️

07:52

OLMC Rosary Teresa Young

Dear sister, I think I just had the best luncheon for the year of 2024. There are many reasons for being the best luncheon. I learnt more about the Philipino culture which is so generous n friendly. The songs in all different languages were amazing. It is very much the Catholic personalities of being universal. I enjoyed all the dishes which all together made a perfect menu. I can go on on til I sleep ◦ I cannot thank you enough. For now I will just say some prayers for your society as a means of gratitude. Love God bless Terese

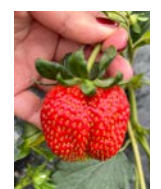
15:26



Chinese New Year – Pilgrimage and Outing

On 13 February 2024, the 4th day of Chinese New Year, OLMC Parish organized a Lunar New Year pilgrimage for the OLMC's English Speaking Parishioner to the new wing of St. Joseph Church in Fanling that was consecrated by Cardinal Stephen Chow only one month earlier, on 6 January 2024. The pilgrimage was followed by a fun-filled outing in Fanling. As this day was a statutory holiday, our parish priest Fr. Thomas Law encouraged the overseas migrant workers ("ofw") in our parish to sign up for this event. To ensure the ofws do not need to worry about moneys, our parish also organized free transportation for the participants on this day, plus a bottle of water each. Fr. Law just wants everyone to relax and enjoy themselves on this day. We initially thought there would be at most 65 participants (exactly 1 bus), as our planning was done in just 3 weeks before the event as we thought that most ofws would already have their own plans. To our surprise, there were so many parishioners signing up for this that we had to keep changing the number of buses booked for the trip, from 1 bus to 6 buses (390 participants), and that is when we could not accept any more participants.

We started the day with all participants meeting up at the parish lobby to collect their bottle of water before proceeding to the waiting buses. On the one-hour journey to St. Joseph Church, a leader in each bus led the Rosary for their group. We had Mass at 10:00 am, celebrated by Fr. Ambrose Mong. After Mass, Deacon Alex Kwok took us through the history of the church, supplemented by Fr. Pietro Paolo Dossi, the parish priest of St. Joseph Church who specially came into the church on his holiday to set things up and to welcome us (God bless him). After Mass, the coaches took us to Lau Shui Heung where we started our fun afternoon with a picnic lunch, sharing whatever food we brought and enjoyed the moment before we walked around taking photos in this beautiful nature park. We organized some games, and the Bethany Choir even came up with a "dragon dance" using some make-shift shawl and masks to complement their Chinese New Year song "Gongxi Gongxi". Some participants came away from these games happy as they received cash prizes donated by some warm-hearted parishioners. Thereafter, the buses took us to the strawberry farm for a fun 2 hours of strawberry picking. We ended the day at 6:00 pm in Wanchai, happy and feeling blessed that God is with us all the way.



THE HOMESTEAD – FEBRUARY 2024

Lent & Holy Week

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday falls on 14 February 2024, which is also the same day as Valentine's Day. Ash Wednesday is important because it is a reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God. It also marks the start of Lent, a six-week period of fasting, prayer and almsgiving, which leads up to Easter when our Lord, Jesus Christ was resurrected. The ashes symbolize both death and repentance. When the priest applies the cross of ashes, he says to the faithful: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent and believe in the Gospel". Ashes used on Ash Wednesday are gathered up after palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned, then blessed before being used in the ceremony.

So, what are the common things to give up during Lent? Well, you can try giving up things that you love, e.g. chocolates, your favourite food, television or even social media. The reason for the self-sacrifice is to replicate Jesus's hardship in the desert for 40 days. Are you ready to do this?

The following are the schedules for Ash Wednesday and Holy Week at OLMC. Fr. Law has scheduled many sessions to accommodate to our parishioners, with the hope that one of them would be suitable for you. Confessions are available throughout. If you need to do a confession on a special date or time, you can also WhatsApp Fr. Law directly. Good luck on your spiritual journey this Lent.

聖母聖衣堂
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH

聖灰禮儀 ASH
WEDNESDAY
14-2-2024

7:30 am
12:45 pm
8:00 pm

As this day coincides with Chinese New Year, you do not need to observe fasting. But please continue with prayers and almsgiving. 是日適逢新春，免守大小齋，但以克己及愛德善功替代。

聖母聖衣堂 聖週禮儀安排 OLMC HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

基督苦難主日 (聖枝主日)
The Passion of the Lord (Palm Sunday)
23/3/2024
*2:15 pm, 3:45 pm & 6:00 pm (中文)
24/3/2024
8:30 am & *9:45 am (中文)
*11:30 am, 1:30 pm & 6:00 pm (Eng)
* 聖枝遊行 (Procession)

聖週四 主的晚餐 Holy Thursday
28/3/2024
6:00 & 8:00 pm The Lord's Supper (中/Eng)
9:00 pm ~ 12:00 am 靜默朝拜聖體
Silent Adoration

聖週五 救主受難紀念
Good Friday - The Passion of the Lord
(守大小齋 Fast & Abstinence)
29/3/2024
9:00 am 早課 + 避靜 (中)
11:00 am 拜苦路 (中)
1:30 pm & 4:00 pm 苦難禮儀 (中)
6:30 pm The Passion of the Lord (Eng)
8:30 pm Way of the Cross (Eng)

聖週六 救主復活慶典 Holy Saturday
30/3/2024
9:00 am 早課 (中)
4:00 pm, 6:30 pm 逾越節守夜禮 Easter Vigil
& 9:00 pm (中/Eng)

耶穌復活主日
Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of the Lord
31/3/2024
8:30 am, 10:00 am (中文)
11:45 am, 1:30 pm & 6:00 pm (Eng)

復活節八日慶祝期 (星期一至五)
Octave of Easter (Monday to Friday)
1-5/4/2024
7:30 am & 8:00 pm



OLMC Main Page
on Facebook



OLMC Page for English Speaking
Parishioners on Facebook



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

