



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

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74th
Anniversary

Summer Edition

THE HOMESTEAD MAY-JUL
2024

SUMMER IS HERE!

In this edition of Newsletter, we bring you many interesting articles and events for your reading pleasure. Remember, OLMC publishes parish newsletter regularly to bring you updates from the various parish ministry, Sunday school, and communities.



Happy 45th anniversary of priestly ordination, Fr. Thomas Law.

30 June 2024 marks the celebration for the 45th anniversary of the priestly ordination of our parish priest, Fr. Thomas Law.

Born in 1950, the eldest of five children, Fr. Law was typical of the working-class struggle to make a living in post-war Hong Kong amidst a changing economic landscape. His experience as a technician in the late 1960s gave him a lasting impression of how frontline workers were exploited. Instead of studying to become a social worker, Fr. Law entered a seminary and was ordained a priest in 1979. Fr. Law is well-known for his outspokenness, and his passion to speak out for the weak and oppressed. One of his famous questions when interviewed many years ago was this, "Why was Jesus nailed to the cross? Because He was not afraid to speak out!".

Fr. Law has served faithfully to the people of God in many places and in many ministries over his 45 years as a priest. Thank you for this, Fr. Law. We pray for you to continue to serve the people of God and God's people for many more years to come.

God Bless!
Homestead Team



OLMC Main Page
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THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Pastoral

To Age Gracefully

By: Deacon Alex Kwok



Let us face it. The Hong Kong population ages quickly and the city has to rely heavily on migrants to sustain the economy as well as other social services. Many factors contributed to the skewed shape of the population pyramid of Hong Kong today. More significantly, those who are holding on to the power to allocate social resources are old! When they refuse to step down, younger people below are unable to move up. Yet, new situations keep coming up. Without new blood, new ideas and youthful vigour to break new paths, our economic prosperity is not sustainable. Why do people on top refuse to resign? One possible reason is that they have not finished leaving significant legacy behind. They want to offer more so that people would probably **remember** them longer when they are gone! I doubt very much whether people would. Moreover, as a Chinese aphorism goes, “*Wealth does not stay beyond three generations* 富不過三代”. Rich granddaddies will never feed rich grandchildren!

However, my wife and I **remember** her maternal grandmother fondly. Her mind was still sound until her last breath. This old lady had never been rich and received no education in her younger days. Yet, she had always been cheerful despite the hardships she went through that were peculiar to her generation back in the mainland. “*Thank you*” was always on her lips. Not just my wife and I, even the doctors, nurses, janitors in the ward remembered her for her cheerfulness which brightened up the gloomy faces of the patients in the same ward. Is not **joy** one of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit? She was truly a path-breaker for us. She had shown us how to age and die gracefully.

Memory of my father is rather mixed. He had been a loyal shopkeeper in a philately shop and had served only two bosses in his whole life. Besides being diligent, he studied English on his own to serve English-speaking customers, including students of the College in which I later taught. He kept a phone book of his colleagues and friends to keep in contact with them after his retirement. It was depressing to see him call them less and less in later years. He outlived them and became less mobile. My father passed away peacefully in his sleep at home. God be praised! Is not **faithfulness** also one of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit?

What have I learnt from them? Both of them aged and died gracefully. They have shown us that such a path is possible. Firstly, both of them had never been ambitious people, wanting to leave a sizeable legacy behind for the posterity. Looking back, am I an ambitious person? Indeed I am. I have been more ambitious than I know! One simple indicator is that I have lost count of the number of books I have collected. Many of them I have never leafed through. Previously they were physical books. Now, they are e-books.

Secondly, both of them accepted their ageing peacefully but I am the kind of person who does not let go easily. I start forgetting things and appointments. Oh, everybody forgets. I start mislaying objects. Oh, who doesn't? My routines begin to fall apart. Well, you are tired. It will get better soon. I stop learning new things and keep doing things I can handle repeatedly. Good of you to strengthen your habits. Your perseverance will build up more virtues. But when perseverance is more than necessary and sufficient, it becomes stubbornness! I used to wear a pair of heavy industrial grade safety shoes in order to strengthen my leg muscles. Only recently did I give them up because my knees were so painful that I was not able to genuflect at the Tabernacle without support anymore. All these symptoms show that I have not been able to accept my ageing peacefully enough. In short, I am an arrogant person. What should I do to prepare for my latter years?

I have been suffering from diabetes for nearly four decades. I do not know what mutant virus I have been living with since the COVID pandemic. Thus, to protect others as well as myself, I keep wearing a surgical mask in enclosed areas such as transportations and air-conditioned premises. I suppose it is safe to remove it on page. Why do I wear beard? To remind myself that I am ageing and that I want it done gracefully. God bless!

<https://alex-kwok.blogspot.com/2024/05/to-age-gracefully.html>

THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Pastoral

First Celebration of World Children's Day

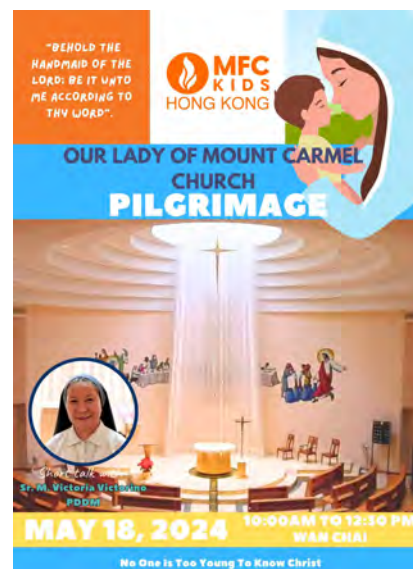
By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

On 8 December 2023, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis joyfully announced the celebration of World Children's Day to be held in Rome on 25-26 May 2024. He narrated that the idea was proposed to him by 9-year-old Alessandro during a Podcast in July 2023 in preparation for the World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal. Pope Francis was so happy with the idea. He said, "Like Jesus, we want to put children at the center and take care of them."

World Children's Day will highlight the presence of the children, ages 5-12, among the People of God. But the challenge is totally directed to us, adults. The Pope invites us to reflect: "What type of world do we want to transmit to the children who are growing up?" While it is truly heart-warming to see the presence of children in our families, in our church and in the society, we know that they are counting on us to help them live a truly meaningful life guided by values that are truly lasting. A child who attended the children's meeting with Bishop Ha last 18 May 2024 at Tsing Yi Church expressed how children like her desire that their parents can provide more companionship and not put so much pressure on them, that the schools can provide not only academic challenges but also formation activities done in better facilities.

Here in OLMC we are providentially highlighting this celebration of World Children's Day in our English masses on 26 May, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. For the 11.45 am and 6 pm Mass, some of the older children of our English Sunday School will be leading us in the liturgy as lectors and psalmist. For the 1.30 pm mass we shall celebrate the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Communion by 18 children in the Eucharist officiated by Cardinal John Tong.

To end, let me mention briefly a surprised gift of the Holy Spirit which I received on 18 May. I was invited to be the guide in the pilgrimage of some members of the Missionary Families of Christ ("MFC") in our beautiful OLMC church. Little did I know that the participants were mostly the Kids and Parents of MFC. It was delightful to hear the child's voice answer my question: "what is the greatest distraction you have in your life?" He blurted, "Homework!" I, as serious adult, was expecting to hear, 'cell phone, gadgets, games, etc.' What a different world is a child's world! No wonder, our Lord says, "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven". May our Blessed Mother Mary intercede for us and help us, not only to love and support all the children of the world, but that we may somehow recover our childlike trust and faith in God, and not be bogged down by the many 'home works' our modern world continue to pressure us with.



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Pastoral

Turn Illness Into Blessings

By: Deacon Alex Kwok

It seems that nobody can remain healthy and strong all the time. Almost all people fall sick for some time in their life due to either the environment or their life style. Whatever type of illness one catches, it is a suffering affecting him and his family members to a certain extent. If the illness is chronic, it will affect the person's productivity. In a commercial and competitive society like Hong Kong, the illness will drain the person emotionally and financially and will waste away his self-image too. In short, any illness will inflict sufferings for some length of time on the sick person as well as the people around him, be they his family members, classmates or colleagues. Can illness be a blessing in disguise?

I am not able to speak for all and can only share my diabetes experience. Before it erupted more than three and a half decades ago, I used to be quite an energetic teacher with my students and colleagues. The school cheered a short sprinter in the final leg of teacher-student 4x100m relays. Students enjoyed the whimsical talks I delivered and engaged in challenges I post in my lessons ... Those good old days receded when I lost more than 20 kg within two months one summer. I tired easily, drank a lot of water and answered the call of nature frequently. Looking back, my life style caused the illness. I used to walk more than 40 minutes from home to school. After marriage, I moved to Tuen Mun and drove more than 40 minutes to school instead. Around the same time, the Education Department pushed forth Information Technology and my school join the pilot scheme. I spent a lot of time in developing teaching materials for this novel curriculum and became more sedentary. Consequently, I depleted my insulin reserve and diabetes descended on me. It was not painful at all but the future would be grim: amputation of legs, blindness and kidney failure etc. awaited me! The very thoughts of those complications pushed me into depression and I became reticent. Had my wife not been cheering me up constantly in those days, I would have buried myself alive in the sepulchre of diabetes. She refused to become a widow so soon!

What blessings have I found in my diabetes?

First, my diabetes woke my children, my friends and colleagues up. Suddenly they discovered that diabetes was not an old-man disease but it could happen to anybody with an *"unhealthy"* life style. The next blessing is more significant. My mother belonged to the older generation and would be happy to give birth to many children. However, wars and revolutions in mainland China denied her of the pride of being a mother of many children. She gave birth to only two sons and they literally endeared her and *"belonged"* to her. My younger brother never got married while I married my first love. You can imagine the kind of tension between my wife and my mother when we told her that we planned to move to Tuen Mun after marriage. She was burning with fury inside her! She made different kinds of mindboggling requests in order to keep me connected ... until my diabetes erupted. At last, my mother accepted that *"a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body"* (**Genesis 2:24**). The tension between my wife and my mother evaporated. I am grateful that God gave me diabetes.

Of course, life is not yet a bed of roses and the prince and princess do not live happily ever after. My wife quitted her job to take care of the children and me. She adjusted her cooking habits to take into consideration my dietary requirements. She studied herbal medicine and acupuncture, hoping to discover the proper cure of my diabetes etc. I am grateful.

Beloved brethren! In July, let us join our prayers with the Pope that the sick and their caretakers may become ever more a visible sign of compassion and hope for us all. Amen. God bless!



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

English Sunday School

Amare et Servire

In everything, love and serve the Lord



The English Sunday School has always encouraged the children to participate in different ministries in the liturgical celebration after receiving the Sacraments of Initiation, as part of their faith journey.



Some of the children have chosen to be Altar Servers. After attending training, they are now ready to serve in the mass.

God bless their young souls!



While some chose to serve as Lectors, proclaiming the Word of God. Every fourth Sunday of the month, the ESS children will serve as lectors in the various English mass of OLMC.

Let us continue to develop in our children the desire to love and serve the Lord.



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

English Sunday School

Journey following Jesus' ministry

The English Sunday School celebrated the last class of this academic year on 16 June 2024. The First Holy Communion class played a series of games with the theme of "following along Jesus' ministry." The class worked together to play the minigames inspired by the story of Jesus calling His disciples and miracles at Cana. The class's knowledge and memory were tested through the guessing game of various events in Jesus' ministry journey, and they needed to share what they remembered from the lessons to clear each stage of the game. Hopefully, this game serves as a reminder that the end of Sunday School is not the end of their faith journey, but it is the start of following along and being part of Jesus' ministry.

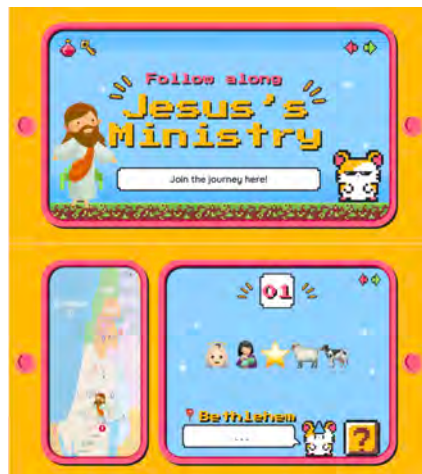
This year, we also welcome three new teachers to our class, and we asked one of them to share with us their experience teaching the class.

Teacher Vania:

My first year of teaching Sunday School has been like "sipping an iced lemon tea" in the summer. Like lemon tea, it is a combination of sweet and sour. You can taste the sweetness by seeing how far and more "mature" the children have grown, and yet, at the same time, how innocent they are in the eyes of the Lord. For example, when we are teaching about Jesus' miracle and helping his disciples catch many fish, one student innocently asks, "Is the fish salmon?" It is an unexpected question that made us laugh. Their innocence carries a genuine sweetness and makes the class more vibrant.

There are "sour" days as well when the kids are down or not behaving in the classroom. But maybe it serves as a reminder of how God calls us—He can use even our lack of understanding to draw us closer to Him. We might think that life is full of mysteries, but those mysteries are actually the small little details that God meticulously designed. Although it is only my first year teaching the children, I have already got many stories I will keep forever in my heart. Their sharp and thought-provoking questions made my first year of teaching the class very refreshing, just like sipping an iced lemon tea in the summer. It can be a little bit addicting too when you are thirsty—when we adults are also thirsty for the Word of God.

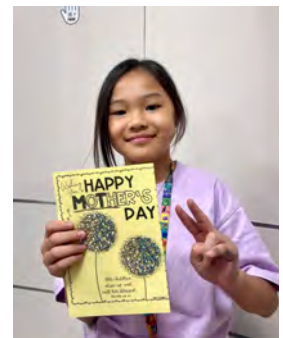
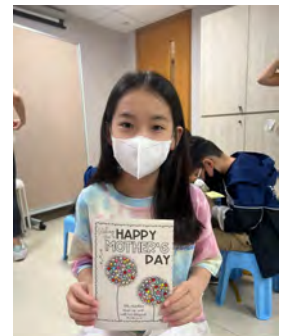
Hopefully, the kids enjoyed the class as much as the teachers did. See you next academic year!



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

English Sunday School

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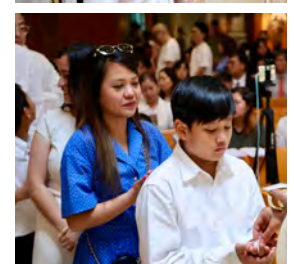
THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

English Sunday School

Confirmation

(during Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity on 26 May)

Confirmation is the sacrament by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives our ESS students the increased ability to practice their Catholic faith in every aspect of their lives and to witness Christ in every situation.



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Living Rosary Group



To Jesus Through Mary: Marian Devotion

By: Adeline Chong

Marian devotion holds a special significance for Catholics and especially for mothers, due to the unique role of Mary as the mother of Jesus and as our Spiritual Mother.

An Exemplary Mother

Mary's unconditional love, faithfulness, and selflessness in caring for Jesus inspires and guides us. Through Marian devotion, mothers can seek Mary's intercession and ask for her help in imitating her virtues and growing in their own motherly love.

*Acts of service: Following Mary's example of love and compassion, families can volunteer with a charity, visit the sick or elderly, or support organizations that assist those in need. This encourages family members to embody the virtues Mary exemplifies, such as humility, faith, obedience and love.

Powerful Intercessor and Protector

Mary can bring our prayers and concerns before Jesus. Mothers may seek Mary's intercession for their children's well-being, health, safety, and spiritual growth.

*Read Jn 2:1-11: The Wedding at Cana avoids 'disgrace' because of Mary's intercession and Jesus' intervention

*Recite the Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Spiritual Nourishment

Through prayers and devotions dedicated to Mary, such as the Rosary or the Angelus, mothers can find moments of reflection, peace and connection with God. Mary is seen as the one who leads believers closer to Jesus, and mothers often find solace and strength in seeking her guidance and companionship on their spiritual journey.

*Families can pray The Rosary or the Hail Mary individually or together.

Source of Comfort

Motherhood is joyous, but it can bear challenges, worries, and sorrows. Catholic mothers find consolation in turning to Mary, who herself experienced the joys and sorrows of motherhood.

* Read books or passages about Mary, meditate on her life and virtues.

By fostering a devotion to Mary, Catholic mothers pass on a love for Mary to their children, encouraging them to seek Mary's intercession and guidance in their own lives.

Marian devotion, which draws us closer to Jesus through the example and intercession of His mother, Mary, enriches our relationship with God when combined with our personal prayer life.

Daily Life and the Power of Marian Devotion – Sharing from members of Living Rosary Prayer Group

- **Shirley:** Joining the Legion of Mary in secondary school allowed me to learn sanctification through prayer and apostolic work in union with Mother Mary. Today, my daily prayers include the Hail Mary, talking to Mother Mary when doing housework and reciting the Rosary when I travel. As an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister, I regularly visit the elderly and deliver Holy Communion to them at their homes or old age homes. My mother was baptized in San Francisco two years before she had liver cancer and passed away peacefully without much suffering and with her children by her hospital bed here in Hong Kong - a strong testament to me of the power of Marian devotion.
- **Carol:** Regular rosary prayer has helped to strengthen my relationship with Christ. The Living Rosary Group sisters have been my source of strength and inspiration in aspiring to be like our Mother, emulating her obedience and love for God. I always find myself praying the rosary or even sometimes just saying endless 'Hail Marys' — when I am most fearful, for instance, when having a medical procedure done. In the last year or so I have continually asked for Mary's intercession for health reasons for me and my loved ones. I also felt her comforting presence during my dad's passing.
- **Teresa:** In my 24 years as a churchgoer at OLMC, the Living Rosary Group is the only group I've joined. Attending rosary prayer has strengthened my faith in God and Mother Mary. Just recently an 'angel' helped me put together a training kit for my sister's new helper. The kit included medical instructions and prayers for the helper to pray with my sister, who has Parkinson's disease. The 'angel' has a full-time job, but was willing to spend over 5 hours on a Sunday at short notice to put the kit together. I believe that through rosary prayer I have been inspired to look after my sister and her helper whom I am now trying to reintroduce to church. God indeed works in wondrous ways!
- **Gemma:** One of my favourite memories of my mom is of her praying the rosary every single day. This became part of my life too a few years ago when I began reciting the rosary every day and joined the OLMC Living Rosary group. I always feel better after praying the rosary. It deepens my faith and my trust in God. It gives me strength and this was especially so during my hospital stay in Canada and during the recent passing of mom. The rosary and the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help has become my true and constant travel companion.

THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Liturgical Biblical Study

LBS Corner: "Be Still"

[Reference liturgical readings for The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B): Gospel **Mark 4:35-41**; 1st reading **Job 38:1, 8-11**; 2nd reading **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**]



The story in the gospel reading on the *calming the storm* is one of the miracles of Jesus in 3 of the 4 Synoptic Gospels narrated this story, that is in *Matthew 8:23–27*, *Mark 4:35–41*, and *Luke 8:22–25*. This shows that this great event made an impact to the lives of the apostles because 3 apostles write in the gospel an experience that they could not forget when Jesus saved them drowning because *A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up (Mk 4:37)*.

Who would forget such an experience as they fear that they will instantly perish amid the storm and yet *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 (Mk 4:38-39)*. Jesus saved them! If we have experienced in our life an occasion that our dear Lord saved us from our own personal troubles and trials, it's pretty sure that we won't forget it and we will forever be grateful in telling over and over again our friends and loved ones about it. More than the narration of the gospel story by the experience of the disciples, they got to know Jesus even more and *they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" (Mk 4:41)*.



The apostles witnessed Jesus healed the sick, they've seen Him drive away demons from those people afflicted with it, they were with Jesus when He made miracles on different occasions. Now, they've seen that even nature follow His command to "*be still*." Like the apostles, we are also amazed as "*who then is Jesus*" in our lives that we follow Him, we wanted to know Him better and loved Him even more. We can't go back in time to have an up close and personal experience on Jesus' actual *calming of the storm* as we have daily storms that we need to deal with around us. We need God's presence to calm us and be assured to be still knowing that he is beside us and we could always feel His presence, grace and mercy through prayer and our constant encounter with Jesus through the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

Let us continue to be inspired and to never forget our own "*Jesus saves story*" as through such experience we got to know Jesus even more.

THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Community

Finding God in the Depth of Silence: Christian Meditation with WCCM

By: Sally Ho

Earlier this year, I joined a WCCM (The World Community for Christian Meditation) retreat hosted by Vivian (WCCM HK Coordinator) and through that I learnt that Sr Victoria would like to start a Christian Meditation group at OLMC. We truly believe it is the blow of the Holy Spirit where we had similar desires for setting up an English-speaking Christian meditation group.

Therefore, we met and had our first discussion in April to plan a sharing session on Christian meditation to our OLMC community. Though we joined together with slightly different reasons, we found a shared desire to share with others the gift of silence and encounter with God through Christian Meditation.

We had our first event on June 10 June, we were told “Oh! there is not much interest in your event, the registration is a bit low” a week or so before the event. We aimed for a small group where it would be more cozy and comfortable for people to share, the number of attendees never being the measurement of success. What mattered more was to help others to start building the bridge through experiencing the silence. We had a turnout of more than 60 people, with both Catholic and Protestant members of WCCM sharing their meditation experience, creating a very ecumenical atmosphere. At the event we also practiced and learnt how to do this form of “pure prayer”. The sense of community through the experience of being in silence together with the Holy Spirit was truly present.

After the first event, there were interests for a more regular meditation prayer community, therefore we set up an English meditation group on Wednesdays. 3 July was the first session, we had over 20 participants joining the group that day both in person and via zoom. During the session we used material from the book *A Simple Way: The Path of Christian Meditation* by Laurence Freeman OSB and the Daily Gospel. Through the simplicity of silence, we found community and connection, here are some of the sharing from the group of participants that never met each other before.

“The session helped me find more time to spend with God”

“Oh I never imagined that Wan Chai can be so quiet”

“I feel a sense of being grounded/planted as I prayed”

“Yes there were thoughts but I went back to the Word, it reminded me that other thought do not matter so much as spending time with God is simple”

“Through group silence, it builds community and trust, I can really feel this here tonight”

We would like to thank Fr. Thomas Law’s open heart and love to his flock and always ensuring that OLMC is home for all where seeds can be sown and grown.

We also thank all your participation, generosity in sharing for those who came. We hope this group can bring you all a little piece of God’s peace into your daily life. If you would like to experience this silence and peace of the Holy Spirit in community. Please listen to our Parish Announcements and English Facebook page for our next sessions. We promise there will be more to come. All are welcome! Let Peace Start With Us.



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Community

What Is A Helper?

By: Staebe

‘It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.’ (Jn 15:16). This line from St. John’s gospel is something the employer is more likely to say than the worker. It serves a purpose though. It clearly sets up a dichotomy between the one who does the work and the one who pays for it. The scripture continues. “I appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.” Clearly it sets up an expectation that the worker shall deliver value-added effort on the job.

Let us pause briefly to acknowledge the input of St. John here. His scripture is the setting for the whole of this review. Let us continue his line of thought. Unlike first impressions may suggest, the Gospel is not one-way, not one-sided. Not at all. The rubric goes both ways. The employer is equally under an obligation to act with fairness, understanding and justice towards the worker. So, the contentious ‘it was not you who chose me, but I who chose you’ applies to both employer and worker in equal degrees! St. John, again thank you for this revelation.

Now to the point. These sentiments are the context for the excellent presentation at OLMC on 1 May. In the afternoon of that day, there was an interactive seminar presented on the social & legal terms and conditions of Foreign Domestic Workers (“FDW”) in Hong Kong (“HK”). Significant emphasis was also put on the emotional and psychological impact on individuals employed as FDWs.



The documentary which was the springboard for discussion was called ‘What is a Helper?’ There were about 50 persons in the audience on that day. Without reservation, the event was an engrossing and valuable experience for all. It was highlighted in the documentary that more often than not; principles and ideals are highly desirable in employment scenarios but are not always evident in reality. It was seen that the real-life experiences of FDWs in HK could fall short of the ideal. The video told the story of four typical FDWs. They were Lisa, Analyn, Narul, Vilma, Joy and Narcissa. Each lived far from their families and familiar milieu. The loneliness

and isolation felt by each one of them during moments of quiet contemplation was beautifully expressed in the song composed by Jane Engelman specially for them, ‘I wish I could kiss you good night,’ inspired by the story of her helper who greatly assisted her while residing and working here in HK. The biographies in the video showed that *unforeseen* and *unexpected* situations may occur with alarming frequency during a term of employment. These situations invariably have huge consequences on both lives and souls; on both employers and FDWs alike.

The après-video brought these aspects to the fore. Sr. Victoria hosted a very lively & meaningful interactive exchange session after the video. The audience revealed many of their innermost concerns and insecurities as well as their personal wins and successes. The prevailing discussion centered around the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & costs of being an FDW in HK. It was vigorously and profoundly illuminating. A special resource person was invited in the occasion: Ms. Dina Daquigan, Welfare Officer of Migrant Workers Office in HK. She works in the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration of the Philippine Consulate of HK. Ms. Dina’s digital presentation on the day, as well as her explanations & analyses were highly professional, dealing primarily with the rights, obligations & resources available to FDWs in law & in practice. Throughout, Ms. Dina answered the specific issues raised by the audience expertly, and with much aplomb. Ms. Dina’s contact details are e: hongkong@owwa.gov.ph

(cont’d on Page 13)

THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Community

What is A Helper? (cont'd from Page 12)

A huge note of appreciation is owed to the organizer & host of the seminar, Sr. Victoria, with the blessing of OLMC Parish Priest, Fr. Thomas Law. Not to be forgotten is Mr. Ernest Wong who made it *all come together* with his quality time & technical prowess.

The seminar, from start to finish, was an enlightenment. All left empowered with fresh confidence & new vision. A take-home message for all could be: successful outcomes are negotiated through a process of joint compromise and mutual goodwill between parties, both employers and FDWs. This dynamic was expressed towards the end of the video, in the passionately beautiful song, sung by the 'Unsung Heroes Choir,' - Find your voice.

In a nutshell, both parties need sincerity. Both need genuine perseverance & determination. Above all, hope & faith. In the words of Sr. Victoria, citing a quote: *we're not obliged to always succeed, but we are never allowed to give up.*



Bringing A Little Encanto Magic to you on 1 July 2024



**WANT SOME 'MAGIC'
IN YOUR LIFE?**

FILM VIEWING AT OLMC

**1 JULY 2024, MONDAY
3 - 6 PM
OLMC LOBBY**

PLS CONTACT: SR VICTORIA - 98585646



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Music Ministry

The Singing Competition (28 July)

By: Rose H. Rodriguez

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Almighty Father for the gift of music. I can say that singing has been a part of my life since I was a child. According to my parents, at the age of two, I would sing along with them during church services, the Angelus, and recitation of the Holy Rosary. Though I have not had any proper singing lessons, it never stopped me from loving music. I remember when I was in high school, my father bought me "Karen Carpenter's" disc cartridges to practice singing, but my exposure only began in college through a friend who encouraged me to join the Cultural Club.



That is where my passion for singing and my exposure to it started. Most of the time, I was appointed to do intermission numbers during my collegiate days. Then, time flew by, and I decided to move to Hong Kong for a better living. When I arrived here, I longed for a place where I could sing. I met Zinnia, who became a very close friend of mine. She convinced me to become a lector/reader like her at OLMC. Eventually, I was also persuaded to sing psalms by Precy Santos in 2019.

However, due to the pandemic, I became inactive in 2020. Still, I was encouraged to join the Bethany choir in September 2022 by my friend, Rizza. God really works in mysterious ways because during those times, I was at the lowest point in my life due to trials and challenges. She told me to come back and serve the church, and to believe that "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Deuteronomy 31:8**).

When I came back, I learned and am still learning the unique beauty of classical singing and proper voice placement. I am really grateful to my fellow choir members who encourage me and boost my confidence, especially our dedicated music teacher, Emmanuel Calinao. This new learning ignites my interest to learn more about choral singing. The Bethany choir has become my adopted family here in Hong Kong, and I always feel happy with the sense of belonging it provides.

Singing at St. Anne's Church and joining the singing competition was a wonderful experience and a great blessing to me. When I was chosen to participate in the solo category, I simply smiled without fear and accepted it wholeheartedly. It was my first time singing a Latin song, "Panis Angelicus."

However, there was a surprising update from the St. Anne's organizers. Five days before the competition, they added another song for the final round. So it means I need to memorize another Latin song before the competition, "Ave Maria" by Bach/Gounod. I took courage and told myself, "I won't think of it as a competition, I will just do my best for the glory of God."

Thank you so much for the help of the beloved Mother, I successfully performed it well. Thank you so much, O God, for the wonderful opportunity you bestowed upon me. Thank you, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Thank you, St. Anne. And thank you to my Bethany choir family. Again and again, "To God be the glory." Amen.

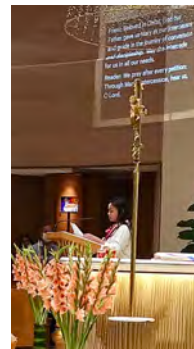


THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

Parish Feast Day

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Feast Day Celebrations

16 July is our parish's feast day. We celebrated this with Thanksgiving Mass starting from Saturday 13 July (in Chinese), then Sunday 14 Mass (in English) and Tuesday (in bilingual). Each Mass started off with a video showing the history of our Parish, and snacks and light refreshments were available on both Saturday and Sunday. This year we celebrate the 74th Anniversary. Happy Birthday OLMC!



THE HOMESTEAD – SUMMER

My Vocation

A Priestly Call: The Start of my vocation at OLMC

By: Gerard Gayou

I always wanted to do something important. When I was younger, “something important” meant working in the White House or the Foreign Service. During my third year of university, a Washington, D.C. priest challenged that notion. “Being a priest,” he told me, “is more important than being President of the United States.”



I never forgot that comment, but it took me a few years to be persuaded. After graduating college, I moved to Mainland China to teach English. Soon after I arrived in Hong Kong, where I began working with the Wall Street Journal as an editorial writer. I will never forget the providential Sunday stroll that took me to the Wan Chai neighborhood on a Sunday afternoon, when I stopped into Our Lady to Mount Carmel church for a Sunday evening Mass. That night, I met Fr. Law, Sister Victoria, and several parishioners who are still friends to this day. They encouraged me to go on a parish retreat. I wanted to make friends, so I went—but priesthood was the last thing on my mind.

That all changed in a period of eucharistic adoration on the retreat. While looking upon the Eucharist, a question welled up in my heart: “What if *this* were my job?” I marveled at the idea. What if my job were something as important as being a priest? What if my life were centered entirely around the Eucharist? I began to consider once more that priest’s remarkable comment during my college days. A President is very important, but he does not work with the deepest part of the human person. It is at that level, the level of the soul, where a priest is called to *live* and bring God’s presence.

My desires for priesthood waxed and waned in the following months. Finally, Fr. Law asked me a question I will always remember: “You are twenty-five years old; What kind of a Catholic man do you want to be?” I decided that I did not want to keep God waiting any longer. If He wanted me to be a priest, it was a call too important to ignore.

I discerned seriously for a year and a half in New York City, where I continued working for the WSJ. But I felt God’s invitation to something more important. I entered St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, DC in the fall of 2019. Five years on, the Lord has shown me that His will, not my own plans, are that “something important” for which I longed. After two years at John Paul II and three years at the North American College in Rome, I am approaching my diaconate ordination on October 3 in Rome’s St. Peter’s Basilica. God-willing, I will be ordained a priest next June in Washington.

I give thanks to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who brought me close to her Son in Hong Kong. In doing so she worked through so many of you— Fr. Thomas Law, Sr. Victoria Victorino PDDM, and so many members of the LBS Bible Study. God is so, so good for giving me a home—your home—so far from my own. I ask for your prayers as I approach this definitive commitment of my life to ordained ministry. Please keep me in your prayers as I get closer to giving my life to the Lord. I hope one day I can celebrate a Mass with you all at OLMC—the great fosterer of my vocation!

