



The Order



Newsletter team from L-R:
Andrew, Edward, Ernest, Greg &
Donald

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From the Editor's Desk



The last six months have been quite eventful for the Singapore Association. Besides the normal activities, we increased our membership by 4 new Knights and a Dame. Sadly, one of our would-be knights, Edward Low, fell very seriously ill just before the Investiture and could not be invested. The good news is he is making a slow but steady recovery supported by the constant prayers of our members and should rejoin us soon. Preparation for the Lourdes Experience also occupied much of the time with fund raising and logistical planning for the event which proceeded almost flawlessly with over 10,000 people in attendance and presided over by our Archbishop William Goh.

6 December 2014

The Lourdes Experience in Singapore

The much awaited day of the Lourdes Experience 2014 on 6th December finally came. This is the third time our Order has organized it; the previous ones were last held in 2004 and 2008. The 2014 organizing committee headed by Chairman Dr Isaac Krishnamoorthy and ably supported by Chancellor Rose Lu began preparatory work a year ago with the help of several sub-committees led by the conveners. The committee comprised of old stalwarts and new blood, a balance of experience, vigor and vitality. The theme was "Lourdes, The Joy of Conversion". The work began with booking of the venue and fundraising by way of the definitive Golf Charity Event organized by Dr Stephen Lim at the TMCC Golf Club on 2nd September which raised sufficient funds to make possible the free admission to this event at the Indoor Stadium.



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17 October 2014

Asia Pacific Conference

Pondering on the Order's 4th Asia Pacific Regional Conference held in Hong Kong from 17 to 19 October, it is evident that it was a melting pot of Asian perspectives with a global outlook. Inspiring works carried out by the various associations largely from the Asia Pacific region converging on a common goal – serving the sick and needy regardless of race, culture, language or religion.

Over 2 days, numerous reports were delivered and, it goes without saying, our cognition was put to optimal use. Listening to the works and aspirations of the various associations, I cannot help but be humbled by the dedication, commitment, zeal, passion and love that powers and sustains all these altruistic endeavours. The affirmation of our charism, Tuitio Fidei, Obsequium Pauperum is simply amazing.

To further the mission of the Order, the Grand Chancellor and Grand Hospitaller offered advice and posed several challenges.



Where recruitment of volunteers is concerned, participants at the conference were reminded to use the same criteria for selection of members as prescribed by the Order.

In regard to selection and recruitment of members, the national associations were urged to start on a right footing – start with the right people who have been carefully selected. Be patient when making a selection, do not be hasty as quality is important and not quantity. To ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Order's charism in any country, membership selection must be stringent. It is crucial that the selection criteria, as indicated by the Order, be used.

It is important to admit younger members for continuity and regeneration but there should be no compromise on quality.

National Associations were asked to use the Commentary on Rules and Regulations in training new members. This could also serve as a resource for regular group reflection and discussion. Ultimately, this promotes a better understanding of the Order.

An association without works that manifest the Order's charism is as good as dead. The charism of the Order is to serve the poor and sick so if an association has no activities, it itself is sick. Hence, it is crucial to embark on activities that members can do hands-on work. This is the only way to live our calling as members of the Order.

There is no such thing as "no poor around", if we look hard enough we will find that the poor is everywhere.

Start with a small activity and keep it going. The young volunteers want to practice their faith and like to be involved in meaningful ongoing activities. International projects are good but they need to be sustainable and ongoing. One-off projects tend to be forgotten quickly. Notably, in the long run, an association must embark on its own local projects as they are important in promoting identity and creating awareness.

Last but definitely not the least, a personal experience in the works we carry out is essential – every member must live this personal experience of being life giving.

The lessons learnt from the conference, when applied, will surely continue to fuel the flame that keeps the melting pot bubbling and overflowing with dedication, commitment, zeal, passion and love.

Rose Lu
Chancellor



Q&A

With Dame Jeannie Tien

Jeannie, in past years you have devoted a great deal of effort in evangelization work overseas especially in China. How did you first get involved in this very challenging call and how do you establish boundaries between family, church and business?

I came from a poor family but my mother taught me good values. Respect is the key word and I respected my late husband as head of the family and also in Atlas the sound and vision business we both started in 1962.

The business is currently managed by my two sons and that allows me time to do God's work but I help out with the business whenever I can. I got actively involved in evangelization work in China about 10 years ago and I believe there are many out there suffering from extreme poverty and that is being uncared, unwanted and unloved. I believe in doing my best in what ever I do.

What are some of the useful lessons you have learned about work in evangelization in the places you have toiled especially in China and what kept you motivated?

I traveled extensively in China to better understand the people and culture before I finally settled in Hainan Island to focus my evangelizing effort. I remember visiting a poor village in Tai Yuen near Sichuan where I met a group of very poor Catholics. It was very cold and they had little to offer. I was touched by their sincerity and kindness. They boiled water to keep me warm and offered me their friendship which I deeply appreciated.

I then recalled what Mother Teresa taught us, "Not all of us can do great things but we can do small things with great love". What kept me motivated was that the number of Catholics increased from about 300 when we first started in 2003 to about 5,000 today in Hainan Island.

Have you experienced difficulties from the authorities in your evangelization effort in China and is the Catholic Community growing?

In my years of evangelization in China, I have not personally experienced any issues with the Government or local authorities. As they say, when in Rome do what the Romans do. I do not flout the laws and there is mutual respect for each other. I am confident the catholic communities have grown as we see more churches springing up in recent years.

In some cases you combined the arts and students exchange programs in your effort to evangelize, how is this effective?

I found students exchange programs meaningful where Temasek Polytechnic and Canberra Secondary School amongst others have participated successfully in these programs with their China counterparts. Students get to interact and appreciate each others culture through the Arts and Cultural programs.

Numbers on juvenile delinquency is on the rise in today's society. If we can do something to keep these kids engaged and help them to realize their full potential and talents, they will have a bright future. It saddens me to see children going to school without shoes and some without uniform. Through our actions they will come to appreciate and it is good to sow the seeds when they are young and for them to witness the love of God for themselves. Religion cannot be forced on anyone.

Do you seek collaboration with our local catholic churches to support your evangelistic effort overseas?

Yes, in recent years some of our local Catholic churches were involved particularly in spiritual support. In the past, the effort was mostly carried out by myself and a group of friends.

Have you personally experienced an intense encounter with the Lord that moved you to tears?

I remember well when my first grand daughter was born in 1998 and she was diagnosed with transposition of the great arteries (TGA). She underwent a 10-hour surgery when she was only 7 days old. I prayed and asked our compassionate and merciful Lord not to take her away as she is my first grand child. She is now a healthy 16 year old.

21 August 2014

Local Pilgrimage for Residents of St Joseph Home

It was a bright Thursday morning on 21 Aug 2014 when we arrived amidst the peaceful tranquility of St. Joseph Home (SJH) to the warm welcome of Sr Geraldine Tan, her staff and the residents of SJH who were all dressed up in eager anticipation of this outing. Knight George Thia led the group to our first destination in this local pilgrimage of the City District churches. We arrived at Church of Our Lady of Lourdes at 9.35 am and our guests joined in silent adoration at the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. Hospitaller Knight Dr. Isaac Krishnamoorthy led us in the Rosary recitation during which the residents of SJH participated wholeheartedly together with our members and associates.

I managed to speak with Sr. Mary Tan, one of the original founders of SJH who accompanied us. When asked about her source of inspiration, she attributed the energy that continues to sustain her in caring for the sick, infirmed and disabled to Jesus. At 79 years of age, she has been a nun for 55 years and she is the only surviving founder of St. Joseph's Home. SJH started in 1978 at Gek Poh Road before its relocation to Jurong in 1993. SJH is undergoing an expansion plan from its current 139 beds to a 400-bed nursing home that will be completed in 2016. All residents have moved to Old Villa Francis in Mandai on 13 Sept 2014.



After rosary devotion, our guests were taken to "Crossings Café" (Waterloo Street) at about 1130hrs where they were treated to a sumptuous lunch of salad, soup, grilled chicken, dory fish and their fill of juices as well to top their enjoyment. Magdalene one of the SJH residents was quick to proclaim that she enjoyed our company and the food very much. After this hearty lunch, we accompanied our guests to attend the afternoon Mass at St. Joseph Church (Victoria Street) just a street away from the cafe.

On conversing with Kight George Thia, he told me it was a pleasant visit of all the churches in the city district as they are all quite close to one another. Moreover, the residents of SJH do not have the opportunity to come to town regularly save for a handful of ambulant residents who will be brought to Jurong Point mall during the weekends. Among the challenges of organizing this local pilgrimage, he told me transportation and insufficient number of caregivers prevented more residents of SJH from participating.

Mass ended at 2.15 pm and we bade each other farewell promising to pray for one another. It was a meaningful and fun outing that presented us with the opportunity to spend time with the Lord.

29 Aug 2014

Memorial of the Beheading of St. John The Baptist

Members, associates and friends of SMOM-Singapore attended a special Memorial Mass at St. Joseph Church (Victoria street) of the beheading of our Patron St. John the Baptist on 29 August 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

Fr. Ignatius Yeo who was the main celebrant in his homily, touched on humility and reminded us not to be inflated to a point where we become self important and allowing pride to overtake us. We must subject ourselves to daily prayers and be humble when we reach out to others in need.

Service ended at about 715pm and everyone gathered for a group photo in front of the church with Fr. Iggy who was all smiles.



The Salvation Story As Depicted In Four Beheadings Through Art

The Italian master painter Caravaggio fled to Malta in 1606 after he killed a man in a duel and was subject to *brando capitale* – a capital sentence conferring a bounty for his severed head. Anyone could claim this prize bounty in the Papal States when his head was presented to the relevant authority. When in Malta, faced with the specter of decapitation and death, Caravaggio painted *The Beheading of St John The Baptist* (picture A) to be presented to the Order of Malta. In this work, Caravaggio painted himself looking on the decapitation as if contemplating on what could be his fate. Caravaggio was rewarded with a gesture of pardon from the Order; he was admitted as a Knight of Magistral Grace.

This however did not keep him out of trouble. Caravaggio presented *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* (picture B) to the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, Fra Alof de Wignacourt, in a bid to appease the Grand Master after Caravaggio had clashed with and injured an illustrious member knight of the Order as a consequence of the recrudescence of his violent ways after a brief penitential period. Caravaggio went one step further this time by painting his own head on the plate held by Salome to express sorrow for the wrong committed and the just punishment he should receive.

If only Caravaggio had grasped the promise of salvation St John The Baptist had prophesied as the harbinger of the coming of our Lord the ultimate savior, Caravaggio would have escaped the intractable cycle of sinful concupiscence and failed penitential acts relying on one's own strength. His obsession with beheadings led him to paint Judith decapitating the Assyrian general Holofernes (picture C). The spiritual significance of Judith's act while lost on Caravaggio should not be lost to members of the Order.

Both Judith and Jael were the only women in the Old Testament accorded the status of "most blessed of women" (Baruch 13:23, Judges 5:24), shared by Mary. Both fulfilling the prophecy of the consequence of the original sin in Gen 3:15, "*I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel*". Judith and Jael severed and crushed the heads of the enemy generals, Holofernes and Sisera, (pictures C and D respectively); each is a Marian type heralding the arrival of our Lady, the true '*theotokos*', for our Lord Christ Jesus. The enemy offspring, Salome, daughter of Herodias and Herod, requested for the wrong head to be delivered due to spiritual blindness as St John is not the offspring who will deliver ultimate victory over the enemy, St John merely paved the way for the greater One to come. Amen



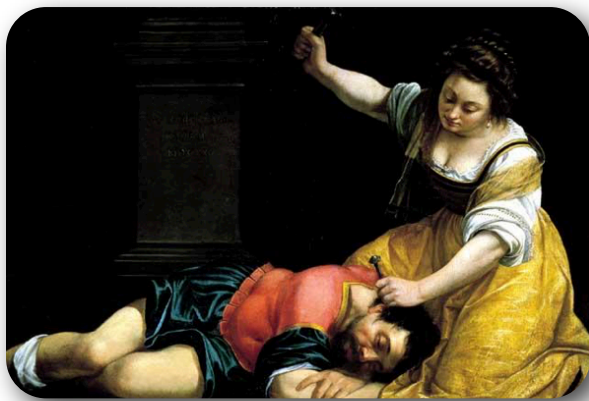
A. The Beheading of St John The Baptist by Caravaggio



C. Judith Beheading Holofernes by Caravaggio



B. Salome with the Head of St John the Baptist (c.1609)



D. Jael Driving A Tent Peg Through The Head of Sisera

2 September 2014

Golf event to raise funds for the Lourdes Experience 2014

The Golf Day Organising Committee was set up with Dr Stephen Lim as Chairman; Knight Michael Thio and Dame Rose Lu acted as advisors to the Committee. Ms Amy Chow was co-opted as treasurer. The members were Mr Richard Loo, Mr Eric Teoh, Mr Wee Leong How and Mr Tan Kay Hui.

Donation appeals were sent to all potential benefactors and we successfully filled all flights in the full capacity golf event comprising a total of 36 flights consisting of 4 golfers per flight making up a total of 144 golfers. The Committee's fundraising target was met with the blessings of our Lord and Mother Mary, through the generous contributions from both golfers and non-golfers.



A thanksgiving 17-table Gala Dinner was held at Tanah Merah Country Club at the end of the event for SMOM members to meet and thank the golfers, sponsors and donors. The golfers received a goodie bag door gift at the reception as a gesture of our appreciation. President Michael Khoo delivered an address and update on our SMOM aims and activities.

Special thanks to all members of the Golf Day Committee who not only worked very hard but also made generous donations.

Stephen LIM
Chairman, Lourdes Experience Golf Day





VIGIL

ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH

18 September 2014

Postulants Front L - R:

*Joseph Chew
Andrew Ee
Emily Chan
Ernest Low
Lennard Thean*

After years of discernment and guidance from their individual spiritual directors, the postulants, Emily Chan, Joseph Chew, Andrew Ee, Ernest Low Yin Peng, and Lennard Thean were ready to be installed as new members of the Order of Malta. The Vigil of the Investiture was held at the Church of St. Ignatius on Thursday, 18 September 2014 at 8:00 pm. The celebrant was Msgr. Philip Heng, S.J., Vicar General (Administration & Religious).

With the strains of the processional hymn, 'Come Holy Ghost', the Cross Bearer, Banner Bearer of the Order, and Altar Servers followed by the Postulants with their robes on their left forearms and the 20 Knights and Dames in their robes were next. The Hospitaller Isaac Krishnamoorthy, and Chancellor Rose Lu was at the rear followed by the Celebrant, Msgr Philip Heng, S.J.

The Postulants then knelt down at the Altar and placed their robes on the floor in front of them with the Maltese Cross uppermost. The celebrant, Msgr Heng welcomed all and he reminded everyone that the Vigil is one of the Order's most holy and ancient traditions. It is a watch, a night of prayer and penitential preparation for the Investiture. He enjoined the postulants to reflect on the vows they would be taking in two days' time. The current members of the Order then renewed their vows.

Following the hymn, 'Make Us True Servants', the Penitential Rite was said. The Postulants then proceeded individually to the celebrant for confession in the solemn and beautiful presence of the Crucifix and the statue of Mother Mary. They then said their prayers of personal penance.

The Gospel Reading on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-11 was most apt for the ceremony. In his homily, Msgr Philip Heng elaborated on the Order's charism: Tuitio Fidei and Obsequium Pauperum: the commitment to reaching spiritual perfection within the holy, Catholic and apostolic Church and the dedication of service to the sick and the poor.

The prayers of the faithful was said next followed by the recitation of the Prayer of the Order by members of the Order and postulants.



The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was then conducted by the Celebrant. The Celebrant then blessed the members of the SMOM and the Vigil Ceremony ended with the recessional hymn, 'Holy God We Praise Thy Name'.

INVESTITURE**ST. JOSEPH'S
CHURCH**

20 September 2014



The Investiture was held on Saturday 20 September 2014 at 10.30 am, St Joseph's Church, Victoria Street. The celebrants were Msgr Ambrose Vaz and Fr Eugene Chong. The Investiture Mass started with the procession of the robed postulants and members of the Order. The Choir of the Church of St Joseph (Bukit Timah) sang the liturgical hymns.

In his homily, Msgr Vaz urged the members and postulants to be more Christ-like in humility, service and sacrifice as they attend to the poor and the sick and that they must be faithful to their charism of Tuitio fidei and Obsequium Pauperum.

At the investiture, the postulants knelt in front of the altar. The President, Michael Khoo presented the Order's Insignias to the postulants with the help of the Chancellor, Rose Lu and Hospitaller Isaac Krishnamoorthy.

The new members recited the Vows as Knights of Magistral Grace and Dame of the Order. This was followed by the recitation of the Prayer of the Order together with the other members.



After the Investiture, all the members together with their families and friends had a convivial lunch at the Pyramid Club at Goodwood Hill.



6 December 2014

The Lourdes Experience in Singapore (continued from Page 1)

The event received the blessings of His Grace, Archbishop William Goh and the Senate of Priests early on. The whole Singapore Archdiocese was involved, with regular meetings held to meet the Parish Representatives from the 31 Churches. The Rosary Chanters began their weekly rehearsals two months before the Event with the rosary recited in nine different languages and dialects.

Fr Ignatius Yeo our most gracious spiritual consultant generously guided us with his wisdom and advice on the liturgical procedures of the Mass. Two weeks before the Event, we joyfully received the news from the Vatican Office that His Holiness Pope Francis has granted plenary indulgence to those who attend this event with the proper spiritual predisposition through preparation.

The Consecration Mass was held on 26th November, 2014 at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul at 6.30p.m.. Despite the heavy downpour, about 80 members of the Order, associates, and their spouses, together with the helpers and volunteers of the Lourdes Event attended this Mass.

The celebrant was Rev Fr Edward Lim. In his homily, he highlighted the importance of not being afraid to speak the truth and do what is right.

Sir Peter Low and the Cathedral Choir again helmed the sacred music that filled the Stadium with uplifting hymns and provided the liturgical inspiration for the pilgrims to pray and be immersed fully in the liturgy.



Among our esteemed guests were four Knights from the Australian Order of Malta. But more importantly, our Lords - the malades, both mobile and on wheelchairs were filled with a tremendous spiritual thirst for healing. As our Blessed Mother interceded for us opening the rain clouds to allow sunshine through, the malades poured into the stadium floor area overspilling their designated areas due to the overwhelming response. The Knights and Dames leapt to their feet forsaking their seats to allow their "Lords" on wheelchairs vantage viewpoint in front of the stage.



The 11,000 attendees were touched by the spirit of the Lourdes experience after a video of previous Lourdes pilgrimages and two inspiring testimonies set the stage for the "Joy of Conversion". They gave a rousing response to the congregation's roll call conducted by the master of ceremony, Knight Thomas. The Stations of the Cross prepared the hearts of the penitent pilgrims followed by the Eucharistic Mass celebrated by His Grace, Archbishop William Goh, and concelebrated by Apostolic Nuncio, Leopoldo Girelli, Vicar-General Mgrs Philip Heng and 15 other priests.



6 December 2014

The Lourdes Experience in Singapore (continued from Page 9)



The Eucharistic Adoration defined the source of all healing, as our Archbishop blessed the sick and processed the Blessed Sacrament throughout the stadium followed by sprinkling of Holy Water by the priests on the sick and all attendees.

The final event was the Marian Procession led by Fr Gino Henriques followed by members of the Order. This procession was accompanied by the recital of the rosary by the Rosary Chanters in nine different languages and dialects. The Lourdes Experience Event concluded to the refrain of 'Ave Maria' filling the air by the faithful in full capacity.



Over 1,000 volunteers worked tirelessly behind the scenes. These included the wardens, ECMs, communion guides, altar servers, doctors, nurses, helpers who set up the altar and Mother Mary's statue, the eight teams from the secretariat, and many more unknown helpers. To them, we owe our gratitude and thanks.



One of the pilgrims in his forties said that he changed his prayer intentions originally focused on own personal needs to pray for others after he saw the number of malades who were worse off. Another pilgrim commented that although the event lasted many hours, it seemed short as he became more spiritually energized through deep prayer.

All in all we had a good Lourdes Event. Mother Mary certainly gave us Her helping hand.

2015

Upcoming Events:

8th January (Thursday)

Thanksgiving and New Year Mass

Venue: Mt Alvernia Chapel

Time: 6 p.m.

Fellowship dinner to follow.

25th January (Sunday)

Annual SMOM Retreat

28th January (Wed)

25th February (Wed) &

25th March (Wed) &

29th April (Wed) &

27th May (Wed) &

17th June (Wed)

Intercessory Prayer & Faith

Formation Session

Time: 8 p.m.

6th February (Friday)

Chinese New Year Outreach

Venue: Assisi Hospice

Time: 5.30 p.m.

26th March (Thursday)

SMOM Annual General Meeting

Venue: Assisi Hospice (CPC Rm)

Time: 6 p.m.

30 April - 11 May

Pilgrimage to Lourdes and Malta

24th June (Wed)

Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Members to be in Church robes

Venue & Dinner: TBC

Time: 6 p.m.