



The Order

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IN MEMORIAM

UPCOMING EVENTS

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

After a very busy year last year, the focus this year is on growing the participation of the members, Happily, more members & associates are participating in the Community sessions and also in the various ongoing projects. The biggest challenge currently is to find our unique niche in serving the Singapore community. Sadly, this year also saw another of our faithful knights going home to the Lord

10th January

Opening Mass & Dinner

Members and spouses attended our New Year Mass at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul on 10th January 2018 at 5.30 pm which was celebrated by Fr Tom Curran. In his homily, he exhorted us to focus on improving our relationship with God. We adjourned after Mass for a fellowship dinner at the nearby Trattoria Lafiandra.



2nd February

CNY Annual Assisi Hospice Visit

The Singapore Order of Malta was represented by 8 members who attended the SMOM Annual Visit to the Assisi Hospice on 2nd February, 2018 at 5.30 pm. The welfare officer, Miss Lilian Lee, welcomed us and also accompanied us on our rounds to deliver Chinese New Year goodies, mandarin oranges and ang pows to the 64 residents. We conversed with some of them and their families. The impressive facilities provided a very comfortable abode for the residents made even more pleasant by the friendly disposition of the nursing staff. This simple event reminded all of us present not to take for granted the blessing of good health. We bade the Assisi staff members farewell at the lobby and we look forward to meeting them again.



4th April

Archbishop Emeritus' 80th Birthday celebrations

4th April 2018 will be fondly remembered by Knights and Dames from the Singapore Association as we celebrated the 80th birthday of our beloved Archbishop Emeritus (AE) Nicholas Chia who is also the Convectional Chaplain of the Order since its inception. In fact, it was AE Chia who gave permission for the Order to be established in Singapore at that time.

The celebration started with Holy Mass at 1730 hrs at St Peter and Paul Church where he once served as an assistant priest. He arrived punctually at 1715 hours and was greeted by well-wishers including his younger sister Mabel, who flew in from New Zealand just to be with him on his special day.

The celebrant Fr. Edward Lim who is also the Chaplin to the Order offered the mass intention for the well-being of AE Chia wishing him happy birthday and good health before mass commenced. He was all smiles when the birthday song was sung in his honour at the end of the mass and many came forward to shake his hands, take photos and wish him well.



A dinner buffet awaited at the nicely decorated function room next to the church where friends, Knights and Dames sat down to enjoy a sumptuous meal specially prepared for him. The birthday cake was soon rolled out followed by the unwrapping of his birthday present, a barong shirt from the Philippines was presented to him which he accepted with delight.

As there were more celebrations in the days to come, we were mindful to send AE Chia back early to rest sufficiently.

As I bade him farewell, he nodded his head, held my hands and said, "Thank you all very much for celebrating my birthday and I am very happy". I then replied, "Your Grace, it is our way of showing appreciation for your love and care, and for being a wonderful priest to the people of God for more than half a century".

3rd to 7th April

SMOM Lourdes International Pilgrimage

A team of 41 pilgrims from the Singapore Association attended the 2018 Order of Malta International Pilgrimage in Lourdes. The group comprised several knights, dames, associates and friends. We were led by our Chaplain Fr Edward Lim, who was also our Spiritual Director. Also with us was Fr Joseph Koh from the Church of Sts Peter and Paul. A three-generation family contingent of seven with the youngest aged 3 years old came along with us making it a historical first in our pilgrimage to Lourdes. To prepare for the pilgrimage, the Singapore team had a pre-Lourdes sending off Mass celebrated by Fr Edward Lim and briefing at the Church of St Peter and Paul on 23rd April.

This year is not only the 160th Anniversary of the appearance of our Lady in Lourdes, we also commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Order's Pilgrimage to Lourdes. More than 7,500 members and pilgrims, malades and volunteers participated in this 4-day event. Among them were 1,500 sick and disabled pilgrims looked after by some 250 priests, 380 doctors and nurses from 45 countries.



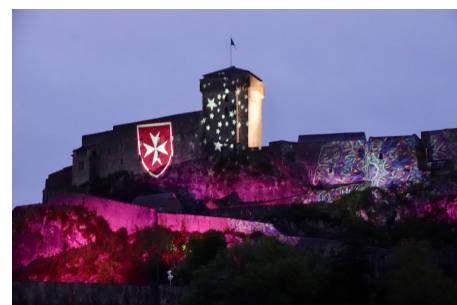
Our group activity in Lourdes began with the opening Mass on Thursday afternoon, 3 May, at the St Maximilian Kobe Chapel. Fr Edward celebrated the Mass with anointing of the sick. We had Mass at the Grotto at 6.45 am the following morning. The main celebrant was Fr Edward with three other priests concelebrating the Mass. After breakfast, we had a brief recollection session based on the first miracle performed by our Lord Jesus at the Wedding in Cana, it was conducted by Fr Edward who provided us with spiritual food for thought. In the afternoon, Fr Edward led the some of us especially those who were in Lourdes for the first time to visit St Bernadette's House.

The main event opened with the Rosary Procession on Friday night, 4 May. Thousands gathered as contingents according to countries at the Esplanade with their candles lit and rosaries in hand. We processed in formation while chanting the Rosary in different languages. The Singapore team was represented by Amy Chow as one of the four candle bearers accompanying our Lady during the procession.

The Singapore group had our own Stations of the Cross at the Prairie the next morning on Saturday, 5 May followed by mass at St Maximilian Kolbe Chapel. At 4.30 pm we had the Holy Sacrament Procession headed by the Grand Master at the Esplanade de la Grotte culminating in the adoration and blessing of the malades. We were privileged to hear from our newly elected Grand Master HE Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto at the ceremony of medals for the new pilgrims at the Eglise Ste Bernadette; each of our malades was presented with a silver cross pin. Our flag bearer was Knight Edward Low.

The Pontifical International Mass was held on Sunday, 6 May, at the Basilique St Pie X, presided by the Special Delegate of His Holiness, Msgr. Angelo Becciu. The Mass was attended by cardinals, bishops and priests; knights and dames in their robes; malades in their wheelchairs and fellow pilgrims from all over the world. After Mass, we proceeded to enjoy our traditional fellowship lunch at Restaurant Alexandra relishing the excellent foie gras and duck confit. Later that night, the group had a session of sharing and reflection led by Fr Edward at the Solitude Hotel.

The last morning event at Lourdes was the Mass for the Malades' Intentions on Monday, 7 May, celebrated by HE the Prelate of the Order, Mgsr Jean Laffitte. It was held in the Basilique St Pie X. The group then departed Lourdes in several minibuses for Pau Airport, enroute to Singapore. All the pilgrims left Lourdes tired but energised by their spirit filled experience.



5th to 9th June

Order of Malta 2nd Asia Pacific Summer Camp

Villa Escudero, Tiaong, Quezon Province

Holidays are the most awaited time of the year for many but not for some. We yearn for holidays to take a break from our often monotonous routine and to enjoy ourselves but this yearning often remains a desire for those in need. Among this group with unfulfilled holiday yearnings are youths with disabilities who may experience varying challenges that blocks them from actualizing this yearning. Challenges they face could be mobility issues, no accompanying caregiver, lack of family or institutional support and financial difficulties.

The Order of Malta fulfilled this yearning for forty one guests (youths with disabilities) who participated in the 2nd Asia Pacific Summer Camp held in the Philippines from 5th to 9th June 2018.

A total of more than two hundred participants from Australia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines attended the camp.

Eleven from Singapore were privileged to partake in the wonder of God's love!

For **Hui Tzi**, one of our beloved guest, her maiden flight from Singapore to Manila is a dream come true! She never imagined that she would ever have the opportunity to go on a plane. Her mother cum caregiver shared that her daughter had a sleepless night prior to the date of departure because she was super excited. The smile and excitement on Hui Tzi's face was unmistakable. She was clearly looking forward to boarding the plane and making her way to the much anticipated holiday.

Vanessa nearly did not make it to the camp as she did not have a caregiver to accompany her. It was providential that a volunteer from Singapore had registered for the camp independently and, more importantly, she has the necessary experience to care for the Order's camp guests. When I approached the volunteer for help, she graciously agreed to be Vanessa's caregiver. God is great!

It is the first time that Vanessa participated in the Order's Summer Camp. Although she has been to several local camps, she was excited and curious to find out what the Order's camp is all about.

Despite all the challenges she faces daily, arising from her many medical complications, she is cheerful. She jokes about the mini pharmacy that she has to carry with her wherever she goes. Vanessa takes about an hour to pack her daily supply of medication but this has not deterred her from having fun and pursuing her interests.

Vanessa has a distinctive laughter that is delightful. Throughout the camp, she can be seen chatting with youths from other countries and engaging in as many activities as possible.

Andrea has had many family holidays but she shared that she was excited about attending the camp in the Philippines. She attended the inaugural camp in Singapore and hoped to have as much fun at the second camp as she did at the inaugural camp. Andrea is positive and has a great zest for life.

Upon disembarking the plane at Manila, to her surprise, she was greeted by a lady holding a signage bearing her name. She was thrilled that her name was on the signage – instant fame for VIP Andrea! This is the beginning of many treats in store for Andrea and all guests at the camp.

The Singapore delegation was met at the arrival hall by the Welcome Team from the Philippines Association. After the handshakes and hugs, we embarked on a 2-hour car ride to the camp site. Although everyone was tired from travelling the whole day, spirits were high and the guests were enthusiastic about what is to unfold in the next three days.

The following three days were full of fun, laughter and bonding.....



Vanessa is making a rooster basket with coconut husk. Andrea is learning how to make pasta and enjoying it.



Hui Tzi is painting her very own design on a cloth tote bag.

Just watching the guests having so much fun and fully engaged in the activities with peers from all over the Asia Pacific region uplifts one's spirit. Their trust in each other and looking out for one another bears testimony to God's teaching on love – "love one another as I have loved you".

Lunch at the world-renowned Waterfall Café at the camp site. To many, this was the best treat!!!

The sight and sound of the waterfall, tantalizing smell of barbecued meat and seafood, sweet chirping of birds, the feel of water brushing the palms as you dip your hands into the flowing stream and feet massaged by running water while you eat - what an indulgence for the senses!!!

The most significant game at the Order's camps is none other than the Christopher Challenge! This year, the Christopher Cup was won by the team from Hong Kong. Singapore played a good game and earned the runners-up spot.

From my interactions with the guests during the camp, it is evident that the Order's camp has a special place in their heart. No matter how ill or physically challenged they are, our guests lived every moment at the camp to the fullest. When the camp came to an end, they look forward to being able to participate in the Order's next camp.

Article contributed by Rose Lu - President, Singapore Association

24th June

Mass for Feast Day of St John the Baptist

Holy Mass on the Nativity of St John the Baptist, Patron Saint of the Order of Malta on 24 June 2018

The Order of Malta celebrated the birth of its patron saint, St. John the Baptist on Sunday 24 June 2018 at the 4 pm Mass at the Church of St. Peter and Paul at Queen Street. The church was full. About 30 Knights and Dames and friends attended. The Dames and Knights were formally dressed in robes marked with the Maltese cross. Among them were the President, her Excellency Rose Lu (Dame of Magistral Grace) and the Immediate Past President, Michael Khoo (Knight Grand Cross of Magistral Grace) and members of the Executive Council of the Order. St. John the Baptist led an austere life, surviving on a diet of locusts and wild honey and wearing clothing made of camel skin, preaching the message of repentance and announcing the fulfilment of the prophecies of the arrival of the Messiah.



“Truly, Jesus said, “I tell you, among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Luke 7:28)

The Mass was concelebrated with Rev Fr. Edward Lim, OCD, Magistral Chaplain ad honorem and Parish Priest of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, as the main celebrant. The two other celebrants were Msgr. Yovko Pishtiyski from the Apostolic Nunciature and Rev Fr Thomas Curran, OCD.

In the Liturgy of the Word, the First Reading was from the Prophet Isaiah 49:1-6, in which “.....The Lord has spoken.....to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: “It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”.

In the Second Reading from the Acts of the Apostles 13:22-26, ...”To keep his promise, God has raised up for Israel one of David’s descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, whose coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the whole people of Israel. Before John ended his career he said, “I am not the one you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am fit to undo his sandal.”

The Gospel was from Luke 1:57-66.80 of the circumstances of John’s birth. Her parents were elderly and way passed the childbearing age. As instructed by Gabriel, the angel of God, Zechariah, his father named him John.

In his homily, Rev. Fr. Edward Lim, OCD, urged the congregation should try to have St. John’s spirit of zeal, mission and sacrifice and not to follow the world’s path of least resistance.

31st May

COMMUNITY SESSION NIGHT

The Singapore Order held its Community Session Night on 31 May, 2018, 7.30 pm at the residence of Dame Rita. Twenty-two members, associates and spouses were treated to a sumptuous dinner by our hostess, followed by great fellowship and a meaningful sharing session. The sharing session was led by President Rose who reiterated that it had been one and a half year since our Working Retreat on 8 October 2016 when we had the opportunity to collective review the Order’s works. She emphasised that we should strive to work towards initiating projects with our own identity. Some suggested that with our limited manpower and resources, we may wish to collaborate with other Catholic charities on existing meaningful projects. Some of the ideas discussed included:

1. Mini Lourdes Experience at local Churches, especially at those with grottos in their premises.
2. Providing food to the poor, including cooking and distributing.
3. Extend the work that we are doing at Assisi Hospice (Dementia Ward) to Apex Harmony Lodge.
4. Reaching out to abandoned children
5. Members/associates/volunteers of the Order be trained in Pastoral Care by an accredited body, not only to be better equipped in our works but also be able to provide training to others.
6. Projects that few in Singapore are doing, including the involvement of non- members.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to our gracious hostess.

The 69 Miracles of Lourdes

I was bemused when a fellow physician member of the Order from another country urged me to register as a medical doctor with the International Medical Committee in charge of examining reports of miraculous cures of malades after having made the pilgrimage to Lourdes. He said he hoped to be called upon as a medical examiner. I held back voicing a question that popped up in my mind. Of the approximately 7000 cases of purported cures submitted since the first cure was pronounced 160 years ago, only 69 were deemed to be miraculous, unexplained by medical science. What about the rest of the 6931 cases? Do they not possess evidence of spiritual grace?

When Bishop Jacques Perrier announced new criteria of classifying the reports of cures submitted to the Lourdes office, these new criteria sought to recognise the grace that the pilgrim experienced even though the cure could not be confirmed as miraculous. Critics immediately pounced and speculated maliciously that the criteria had been made less stringent to boost the number of recognised cures to compensate for the paucity of confirmed cures to date.

God certainly does not need to work miracles in Lourdes as proof of His existence. The miracles of life and nature are abundantly present for those of us who have eyes unobscured by spiritual scales to see. Certainly, medical cures are not the exclusive domain of God as even the Pharaoh's magicians can work miracles (Exodus 7:22) and I have personally witnessed a cure of a cancer patient who followed the instructions of Tibetan monks. Therefore, we need not be too anxious to claim miracles for God to prove to the atheist that He exists.

As Dalai Lama once told an atheist, the difference between them lies in the fact that he has kept an open mind and when presented with the evidence that God does not exist, he will cease to believe in God; however, the atheist has his mind made up such that he will not believe no matter how strong the evidence is for God's existence.

Atheists love to ask why are there only crutches hung up at the grotto in Lourdes and not amputee leg stumps? They say placebo effects cannot be claimed to be miracles; if limbs grow anew then it is a different story. Really? Even if God causes limbs to grow out of amputee stumps, these atheists will still find a very self-plausible excuse to disbelieve the provenance of such a phenomenon. This is clearly described in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man in Luke 16:19-31 (Lk 16:31 – He said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead").

The malade I wheeled to go for the bath in Lourdes was Uncle George who has a chronic degenerative condition. After the bath, he gained sufficient strength to walk for close to 1 km around town pushing his wheelchair along rather than being ordinarily confined in it. He was of course not fully cured. To him, this was grace shown to him that was already all too sufficient. The ultimate message he received being that God still loves him despite his suffering and his faith was strengthened in the renewed joy of being reaffirmed in the knowledge of his personal salvation through Christ Jesus. All Marian devotion as experienced in Lourdes should lead to this joy, or such devotion will be vain and idolatrous.

To conclude, let us not be too perturbed when we do not witness outright medical cures in Lourdes, we obey the call to facilitate the pilgrims' path towards God, we lay hands on the sick to pray for them because we were told to do so, whether they are cured is none of our concern, it is God's prerogative.

Article contributed by Donald Poon - Chancellor, Singapore Association



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

In Memoriam

Alphonsus Loh Kum Fook

The Singapore Order of Malta mourned the loss of one of our members on 3rd April, 2018. Knight Alphonsus Loh was invested a Knight of Magistral Grace in 2007 and had since been active in the Order over the years. He had served on the EXCO and also as Treasurer. Together with his wife, Dame Susan Loh, they carried out outstanding works of mercy. He was an Extraordinary Communion Minister in the Church of St Ignatius, and visited homes and hospitals to bring Holy Communion to the sick. He also helped out in Catechism sessions for the youth as well as in pregnancy crisis counselling. He was also an active member of the Legion of Mary. We will all miss him.



2018 Upcoming Events:

Friday, 20th - Sunday, 22 July

SMOM Retreat

Venue: St. Damiano retreat Centre

Wednesday, 15th August

Assumption of Our Lady

Wednesday, 29th August

Martyrdom of St John the Baptist

Thursday, 16th August

3rd Executive Council Meeting

Venue: Assisi Hospice mtg rm

Time: 6:00 pm

Wednesday 29th August

Mass: Passion of St. John & Memorial Mass for our departed Confreres & Consoeurs

Venue: Mt Alvernia Chapel

Time 6:00 pm

Thursday, 18th October

4th Executive Council Meeting

Venue: Assisi Hospice mtg rm

Time: 6:00 pm

Sunday, 28th October

Outreach to St. Theresa's Home

Venue: St. Theresa's home

Time: TBA

Thursday, 9th - Sunday, 12th November

SMOM Asia Pacific Conference

Venue: Philippines

Thursday, 22nd November

5th Executive Council Meeting

Venue: Assisi Hospice mtg rm

Time: 6:00 pm

Thursday, 6th December

Thanksgiving Mass & Community evening

Venue: Mt Alvernia Chapel

Time 6:00 pm

Saturday, 19th January

SMOM Gala dinner & Fundraiser

Venue: TBA

Time 7:00 pm