



canorita'

Province of St Anthony

CHRISTMAS 2013

THE NATIVITY STORY

Celebrating WORLD DAY for CONSECRATED LIFE



**Celebration at
St Teresa's Church
on 2nd Feb 2013**



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Message from Provincial Leader

Dear Sisters, Rev. Fathers and Friends,

It seemed like yesterday when we celebrated the Opening of the “Year of Faith” in the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and now it is over. Despite the quiet closure on the Feast of Christ the King, it has been a grace-filled year for us in the Institute, the Province as well as for the Archdiocese.

The definition that “faith is the person Jesus Christ” is etched in my heart - something I learned as a postulant from Sr. Joy Shelley . Hence the Year of Faith was an invitation for me to deepen my relationship with Jesus and to live this trust that He is my Lord and my *All in all*.



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

Looking back at 2013, we thank the Lord for the many signs of His loving presence. We witnessed the Episcopal Ordination of Msgr. William Goh on 22nd Feb and subsequently his appointment as the Archbishop of Singapore after Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia stepped down after his 75th birthday.

Do you remember the reactions when the world heard that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI announced his resignation from the Papacy? The question in many people’s mind was “What is happening? What will happen to the Church?” Many wondered if any untoward event would follow. Then came the springtime of New Evangelization when Pope Francis was elected. He epitomizes St. Francis of Assisi, a saint of the 12th century who lived poor and simple like Christ himself. In Pope Francis, we recognize the face of the early Church that Christ had intended when He called his early disciples. It is a Church for the poor. The simplicity, humility and Christ-like images of Pope Francis capture the world’s imagination and probably gave the world a glimpse of who Jesus is when he walked the earth more than 2000 years ago.

The Lord came to us when we had the Canonical Visits to the different communities in February and March. The Council also had the opportunity to meet members of the lay people who are our partners in our ministries.



Canonical Visit

In the second half of 2014, the different Provinces celebrated the Provincial Chapters. During the Chapter from 11 to 19 October the Lord sent us Jill McCorquodale and Andrew Sng who were our Facilitator and Resource Person. Over the nine days, our hearts sang with joy, overwhelmed with gratitude and hope for the future of the Province. There was the constant refrain among the Capitular Sisters that we need to rebrand ourselves as ONE CANOSSIAN. This is an inspirational call to a personal renewal and commitment as a Daughter of St. Magdalene.

Our facilitator Jill and Resource Person Andrew Sng



Different teams drafting & presenting

We see signs of growth in the Myanmar Outreach which has now become officially a part of the St. Anthony's Province. We witness a growth in vocations coming from Myanmar itself. Many more young ladies have expressed a desire to know the Sisters and our Charism better.



I had the opportunity to visit Nagasaki with Sr. Dorothy. We learned about Christianity in the early Church in Japan. The visit opened our eyes to the suffering of the Japanese Christians and missionary martyrs and how the Church in Japan had withstood persecution and bloodshed for the love of Christ.

During the Annual Retreat with Fr. Alex Rebello, the Sisters were invited to “drop everything” and spend time in contemplation with the Lord. It was yet another moment of faith-filled and grace-filled days.



SEAMS XV - SINGAPORE 2013

The XV Southeast Asia Major Superiors Congress (SEAMS) held in Singapore from 15 - 19 April was a reminder that modern day slavery is still happening and the Church is called to counter Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia.

No matter how much need there is in the world, XVI AMOR Conference in the Philippines reminds us that religious needs to constantly live the Mystic-Prophetic dimension of Religious Life. It was a timely reminder of the theme of our Chapter that “a mystic is a prophet in contemplation and a prophet is a mystic in action”. Indeed, beyond the year of Faith all of us, religious and lay, are called to live a life of discipleship not only in action but in contemplation. Nothing will change the world if Christ is absent. Christ is not found only amongst the multitude but also in the quiet on the mountain. He is present not only during the feast in Cana but also on the Cross on Calvary.

At the close of the year, we need to reflect deeper what it means when we are invited to “Look and do likewise – that the world

may believe – to be a joyful and prophetic witnesses”. Jesus is asking each of us, “What kind of Christian, disciple and religious am I? Are we contented with the mundane things in our lives and happy to be “busy” with the affairs of the world? Is there any difference between me and the person who is out there trying to earn an honest living?

At the close of the Year of Faith, Jesus continues to invite us to deepen our relationship with Him. Are we really “busy with the Father’s business”? Through the different signs, I believe the Spirit is inviting us to deepen our understanding of the call to be contemplatives and prophets in the world today. Let us take a leaf from Pope Francis and learn from him what it means to “look and do likewise”. As we slow down and look back on 2013 with gratitude for an exciting year, let us surrender ourselves and ask the Spirit to lead us into 2014 with renewed vitality and fervor as an evangelizing religious / disciple for Christ.

Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in our convents/homes and the genial flame of charity in the heart. On behalf of Sr. Geraldine Tan and Sr. Dorothy Lim, I wish you and your loved ones the only blessing that will last

*Wishing you
the gift of God Himself
Immanuel
God is with us!
Wishing you
a Blessed Christmas and
a Happy New Year 2014.*

*Blessings and warmest wishes,
Sr. Theresa Seow
Provincial Leader*



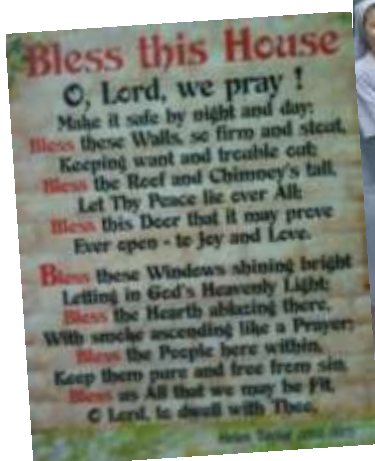
A New Address for St. Anthony's Canossian Convent

In the tradition of the Province's history since 1894, the Sisters who serve in the schools will continue as a community in the vicinity of the school. They have found a new home in a HDB flat at **Blk. 92 Bedok North Avenue 4 #05-1481 Singapore 460092**. The flat is ideally located opposite St Anthony's Canossian Schools.

This community retains the name of **St. Anthony's Canossian Convent**. Currently, the apostolic group working from this premise comprises Sr. Geraldine Lim and Sr. Christina Yeo. The group is linked to Canossian Convent Community and Sr. Geraldine Lim is the Coordinator for the St. Anthony's Canossian Convent Apostolic Group.

On 29 Nov 2013, Father Joseph Nathan OFM celebrated the first mass for the Sisters in their new home. After mass, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in one of the three rooms in the flat. This room has been set aside as the room for prayers and daily adoration.

We ask the Lord to bless the house on this happy and joyful occasion and guide the sisters in their apostolic work.



Fr Joseph Nathan celebrated the first mass at the new home in Bedok North

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Deeply rooted in Prayer Strong in Faith Active in Charity

Sr. Janet Wang

This was the three-fold theme of our annual retreat held in June 2013, directed by Msgr. Alex Rebello who came all the way from a sea-side parish in Wales where he has been sent to serve as a missionary from India.

We know how important prayer is in our spiritual life. But since it is rooted in the reality of our daily life, it needs **to be anchored in times of silence and solitude, where "heart can speak to heart"**.

With a series of prayerful reflections on selected psalms, **we were reminded to listen attentively to: "What is God is saying to my heart? "Be still" (Ps 46:10), "like a child in its mother's arms" (Ps 131:2), waiting patiently, "yearning like a deer for running streams" (Ps 42:1), seeking for God and being found by Him. And finally, like Jesus, surrendering our whole life to the Father (Ps 31:5).**

We had ample time for personal prayer and reflection to deepen our relationship with Jesus whose whole life is a **surrender to the Father. "I come to do your will."**

Jesus is urging me to:

- pass through the door of FAITH so as to recognize **His presence in my daily life: "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20)**
- be a true disciple, attached to Him alone, abiding in His love and sharing His mission.

It means "launching out into the deep," not to be

caught up in petty things, ready to face the challenge to go beyond what is familiar, get out of my comfort zone to go with Jesus to where the Spirit leads.

For me, and for our Singapore Province, I see the call **to serve the poor and bring the Good News of God's love** to the little ones and the youth in Myanmar as such a challenge. The little Canossian seed planted there with courage, faith and trust, is now growing beautifully by the grace of God.

The Holy Spirit continues to Vivify, Fortify, Beautify, Unify and Sanctify us.

Let us get on this Very Fast BUS!



Outreach to Myanmar - Project Micah

By Sr. Margaret Goh

Project Micah morphed out of Project Smile which was started in 2010. Project Smile was initiated by Richard Morgan who often goes to Myanmar to help at St Anne's Orphanage run by the Reparation Sisters in Taunggyi. He enlisted a number of "more senior" men and women to 'adopt' some orphans by pledging US\$300 annually to subsidize the education of a needy student.

Some benefactors wanted to go to Myanmar to visit their 'adopted' children. This desire developed into a project to spread Christmas Cheer to these children as well as other children from a multi-handicapped Children's Home in Taunggyi.

I was invited to join the group in December 2010. It was an empowering experience for me. We received more than we gave - the joy of reaching out to others and the bonding within the group. I remember when I was doing my part 'cooking a big pot of fish', my eyes streamed with tears from the smoke that came from the firewood or was it tears of emotion?

Some members of the Living Stone community, a group who ministers to Catholic tertiary students got the wind of this and asked to be part of the project. So in 2011, besides improving their library with more books and other programmes, about 20 participants including some younger IT savvy members also set up computers and started computer literacy activities for them in the Orphanage. From Sr Helena, the superior, they learnt that the children do not get to bathe everyday because of the shortage of water during the dry season. With funding from CHARIS, the group proposed to build a water-tank for them. As 'Project Smile' is a name already used by another group assisted by CHARIS, we came up with a new name 'Project Micah' and I was asked to be the Spiritual Director of this group.

By December 2012, the water-tank project in Taunggyi was completed. We developed other programmes in St Anne's Orphanage, visited another orphanage, and a Boy's Home run by Fr Paul in Kalaw. There we organized a dinner and campfire for about 200 children in that area. The group also visited Canossa House at Thanlyin where Sr Angela and her team have been conducting FED courses as well as housing some orphans from the 2008 Nargis Typhoon. Project Micah helped Canossa House with some funding for their water tank. Sr Jacqueline Chin has also been roped in to be an advisor of Project Micah since she is familiar to the situation in Myanmar.

Looking at Project Micah's Mission and Information of needs, the group has decided to go to Myanmar in 2 - 9 March 2014. The target for this outreach project at St Anne includes consolidating the Library and conducting intermediate computer lessons. There is also plan to reach out to a boys' home, the Bakhita Home at Hopong where two of our FED girls are stationed. Project Micah is also raising funds to build a wall round the Home and compound to prevent vegetables and fruits grown from being stolen. Fund is also needed to disinfect the building from bugs and crawlies. To prepare for this project the Group had a retreat on the 30 Nov 2013 to pray for God's help to make it a fruitful and spirit-filled outreach to our 'friends' in Myanmar.



Four Years as Local Leader

of St Joseph's Canossian Convent [SJCC]



I am grateful to God for the gift of love, joy and contentment in my four years at SJCC. There were many happy moments, also sad ones when Sisters became sick and passed away. Three elderly sisters passed on, Sr. Theresa Tan, barely four months after my being a Local leader, then Sr. Frances Lan, after a stroke on Feb 11, 2010 and finally the unexpected demise of Sr. Elizabeth Law on 5th Nov 2013. Though they are gone, a part of them lives on in me.

There were frightening moments too. Once, two Sisters were involved in an accident at the airport, I got the call about this in the middle of the night. Thank God all were well. Sr. Vittorina Lamperti, ever lively and always on-the-go on her wheelchair too, nearly hurt herself when she pushed her wheelchair backwards and was clinging to a pole when I saw her. Through it all I was always confident that Mother Mary would be looking out for them.

Of course I remember the many happy moments as well: the relationships fostered, the birthdays celebrated, the outings and the laughter shared during recreation. Sr Vittorina's sense of humor is illustrated one evening when I asked her to remember her night prayers. Her quick reply was, "Remember to say yours too".



Sisters sharing a joke

Sr. Virginia would always remind me affectionately to come back when I had to go to the Provincialate for meetings. There were also many acts of love: Sr. Maria Riva would ensure that all clothes were returned to my room and Sr. Mary Wong or Sr. Mary Tan would always offer to drive me to Merbok.

I was glad to be involved when the National Technological University Catholic students came to St Joseph's Home for their activities. There were also the two years when I taught Catechism at Church of St Francis Assisi. Sr. Maria Riva often said I was sent as a blessing to serve where the other sisters cannot.

My interaction with the staff and residents included the English lessons I gave to the Myanmar staff and the training of lectors for Mass. I was grateful for their presence, especially those who helped the elderly sisters with so much respect and love. Many residents came and many returned to be with the Lord, but I only witnessed the actual passing of Sr. Frances Lan.

Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia often come to see the Sisters and to share gifts with us. He brought cheer to the residents or priests who were with us. I still remember fondly Fr. Brys who was with us for a year. Besides celebrating daily masses, he shared meals and sometimes participated in our recreational activities too.

I am indeed blessed to be with the Sisters at St. Joseph. Thank you dear Sisters, for the many happy days we had together.



Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia with Sr. Anna Ong

Bedside Archaeology

During the **International Women's Day Events** in Singapore, a feature story on **Asian Women in Palliative Care** paid attention to what the Canossian Sisters are doing in St Joseph's Home. As Sr. Geraldine Tan said, "At St. Joseph's, we have a slogan: No One Dies Alone." Below is the write-up and pictures from '**After Cicely**', a film about Asian Women in Palliative Care commissioned by the Lien Foundation. **Sr. Geraldine Tan** is one of the 5 inspiring women featured in this documentary film released on **6 March 2013**.

While communal dining spaces and landscaped gardens might evoke feelings of comfort at nursing homes in Singapore, elderly residents often have to forego their personal bedrooms to sleep in shared wards due to high costs and space constraints. With little space to call one's own, the humble bedside table has become an expression of one's personality in his sunset years.

This series was photographed at lunchtime at St Joseph's Home and Hospice, which was set up by the Catholic Welfare Services in 1978. The home cares for 130 residents and has around 20 beds for those who need palliative care. Sr. Geraldine Tan, who has helped run the Home since 1985, believes in creating an environment of love and comfort. She shares her thoughts on caring for those at the end of life.

"Palliative care is about asking the person how he wants to live. Is there anything we can do for you? And it may not be big things like traveling around the world. It can be very simple things."





“Some 40 years ago, death was seen as a failure to medicine. So when we had patients dying in the ward, doctors would walk pass them and go to the next bed. And that affected me quite a bit. Why aren’t they important? They have lived their whole life to that stage and now they are saying goodbye and why is there nobody around?”



“In palliative care you are invited to be in their circle. We don’t push ourselves in. The invitation is very important. And that invitation... It’s not just to doctors or nurses, it is someone whom they have felt care.”



I have called you by name

Agnes, MaryAnne, Theresina and Rosa

by Sr. Marilyn Lim

Four young women, at different times in history, heard a call, left their families and sailed for Hong Kong, to enter the Canossian Novitiate for their Religious formation. Srs. Agnes, Maryanne, Theresina and Rosa began their Annual retreat recently, guided by Sr. Marilyn from 21-24 Nov in Kluang.

Sr. Agnes left in 1936. Her boat was struck by typhoon and she arrived all wet. One boarder wrapped Sr. Agnes with her sweater. This was her first experience of Hong Kong. Despite the initial struggle with the language (Cantonese and Italian), Sr. Agnes remembered, "I was so touched by the love of the people."

Srs. Maryanne, Theresina and Rosa, came from Malacca. They also made their Novitiate in Hong Kong. Their initial fears of a new land and culture were quickly replaced by the motherly care and understanding of Mother Pirota, their Italian Novice Directress.

What a challenging way of answering God's call, leaving behind familiar shores for an adventure with God who would continue to prove his fidelity all through their Religious Life! As the four elderly Sisters continued to share their vocation story, the retreat proved to be a time of joyful and grateful remembering of the many blessings from God, the secret of their prayerfulness and the serenity in the sunset of their lives.

Sr. Agnes first met Mother Christine Rozario who was in charge of the boarders at St. Anthony's Convent. When asked, "Agnes, what do you want to be", she replied, "I want to be a Sister". Sr. Theresa Tan was the first contact of Srs. MaryAnne, Theresina and Rosa at Sacred Heart Canossian Convent. She welcomed them, showed them the dining room and explained the way of life in the Convent to them.

What gifts did they bring to the community and ministry?

Sr Agnes was excited when attending Bible courses was the norm. She wanted to share the Word of God and make Jesus known and love. She discovered her gift for teaching and being the second eldest of five girls and five boys in the family, she was a natural leader. She exercised her mandate as principal and Superior very faithfully for a good number of years.

Sr. MaryAnne loves the poor and the little ones. She found great joy teaching catechism and preparing children for First Communion and visiting the sick at home and in hospital. She was the cook for the community for many years both in Singapore and Malaysia and she took great pride in preparing special dishes for feast days for her Sisters, boarders and aspirants.

Sr. Theresina was zealous in teaching catechism in Teochew and she accompanied catechists to teach catechism in homes. She gave herself generously to community services, helping in the kitchen cooking for some 20 to 30 sisters, most of whom were heavily involved in ministries. In her free time, she would visit the sick in homes and hospitals.

Sr. Rosa, a great evangelizer, visited the sick and prayed with them; she joyfully managed the kitchen and sacristy. She also found time to visit the lepers at Sungei Buloh in Kuala Lumpur, to bring comfort and hope, and to strengthen their faith. She vividly recalls how, during these visits, Sr. Enrica Perego, her companion would eat whatever the lepers offered her.

Dear Srs Agnes, MaryAnne, Theresina and Rosa, thank you for sharing your vocation story; you have strengthened my faith and reminded me that our God is an ever-living and faithful God. May you continue to be an inspiration for the young women who are today searching for meaning in life and desiring to know God's will for them! A d multos A nnos!



From L to R

The four retreatants are: Sr. Theresina Lim, Sr. Mary Heng, Sr. Agnes Norris and Sr. Rosa Lim

(Srs MaryAnne and Theresina celebrated their diamond jubilee during the Eucharist together with the Malaysian Sisters at the close of their Provincial Chapter on the feast of Christ the Kluang, 24 Nov 2013)



MY CALL TO BE A LAY CANOSSIAN

Martina Ho (Veritas Group)

My first meeting with the Canossian Sisters was during my father-in-law's stay at St Joseph's Home. Sr. Casarotti asked if I would like to be a volunteer there. Little did I know that Sr. Casarotti was grooming me to become a Lay Canossian.

I had already signed up to be a catechist at the Church of St Francis of Assisi where Sr. Casarotti was a catechist. I also saw her at work at the Home as she attended to my father-in-law physically and spiritually - giving him communion after mass. Soon after his death, Sr. Casarotti asked if I would like to be a volunteer at the Home and also be a Lay Canossian. I was troubled as I did not know what the role of a Lay Canossian would entail. I was fearful that I would not be able to fulfil my commitments and duties.

Then, a series of events happened which dispelled the concerns that I had. I was holding a regular job when I agreed to be a volunteer at the Home. There I met a terminally-ill, destitute lady in the Hospice Ward. When I met Serene, she was not fully conscious and could hardly respond to people. When she could, I conversed with her in Cantonese. I said the rosary with her for two weeks and saw peace and serenity gradually enveloping a previously broken, neglected lady. She died 25 minutes after my last visit, surrounded by warmth, care and friends [the Canossian Sisters and the volunteers] who loved her.

In June 2011, just 4 days prior to my trip to Cambodia, I accidentally kicked my foot and dislodged one of my toe nails. The doctor who removed the nail for me was against the idea of my travelling as I would be visiting the rural communities. He was concerned that my wound might become infected. But I had a strong desire to go. I felt that the Lord wanted me to go on this trip, so I went ahead to Cambodia with my wounded toe, bandages and all. Nothing happened. After my return, I had an operation on my right knee in July 2011 and was recuperating at home when I decided to read the book entitled "*Magdalene of Canossa*" by Fr. Modesto Giacon. It was then that I finally realized why I had to go to Cambodia.

On page 59, the Lord had revealed to Magdalene the idea for her future Institute in a dream which took the form of a supernatural vision:

*She saw a lady in the company of six young women, dressed in brown habits, with black shawls on their shoulders and black bonnets on their heads. Around their neck, each had a medallion of Our Lady of Sorrows. At a certain point, the lady summoned two of the young women and sent them amid a crowd of girls **to teach catechism**. To two others she indicated the wards of a hospital, inviting them **to assist and comfort the sick**. And finally she took the last two by the hand and led them into a large room. There was **a bunch of poor, dirty, unkempt children**. And she indicated the school as their area of work.*

It was at this point that my eyes were opened: I did a checklist:

To teach catechism : I had taught catechism in my previous parish of Ss. Peter and Paul for 12 years, and in my present parish of St Francis of Assisi for 11 years where I am still teaching;

To assist and comfort the sick : I had started doing this since the day Sr Casarotti assigned me to journey with the residents of St Joseph's Home;

A bunch of poor, dirty, unkempt children : this was the missing link in my experience, and it explained why I needed to go to Cambodia - to experience what it was like to serve the poor, dirty and unkempt children over there.



This is how our Lord gave me the confidence and assurance that I am called to offer my service as a Lay Canossian. It was also the Lord who planned and arranged for me to be a Lay Canossian.

Exactly two months after my operation, I walked steadily into the chapel of St Joseph's Home and declared my commitment as a Lay

Canossian during the enrolment before the community and the Provincial Leader. What a joyful day it was for me!

Becoming a Lay Canossian

Dolly Goh

I got to know a few of the Canossian Sisters in 2007 while serving in the soup kitchen at the Church of Nativity. Though the encounters were brief, I found them to be always very friendly, helpful and willing to serve.

God sent me an angel in the person of Sr. Gerry Lim who befriended me and guided me in this journey of faith. Through her, I learnt many things about **God's love e.g. keeping faith**, having always a grateful and thankful heart, humility and how **to bring God's love to others**.

In 2008, I joined the Teochew Rosary Prayer group for the elderly where Sr. Gerry was the spiritual guide. Besides the Rosary, we now also pray the Divine Mercy in Teochew. By **God's grace, this group grew** from just a handful of members to over 30 who faithfully attend the weekly prayer sessions. These were always followed by a meal and fellowship. This prayer

group has helped me in my spiritual growth especially with their sharing of life experiences and their steadfast faith in **God's love and mercy**.

In 2011, Sr. Gerry invited me to become an observer in the meetings of Bakhita Group Lay Canossians [LC]. I had no idea what to expect and what was required of a Lay Canossian. The Group Co-coordinator, Joanne Wang and the group members made me feel very welcome and comfortable at the meetings. As I began to participate in more LC events, I got to know about their ministry. One of these is the Power of my Dream Programme [POD]. It involves visits to Changi Women Prison to conduct sessions to help selected inmates find healing and meaning in life after prison. I volunteered to be part of this and am now a member of the **team to bring Christ's love to the inmates**.

The decision to enrol as a LC was not easy — many questions floated in my mind; confusion, conflicting ideas, self-doubt... **yet I had a great desire to share Christ's love** with others. Then it dawned on me that I could never be perfect. I would always be a **'work in progress' living each day**, seeking to be a better person, developing a deeper relationship with God, my Father.

My enrolment was on 14 Sept 2013 at the Eucharistic Celebration on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. It was a significant day as it is the Year of Faith and the

occasion was witnessed by His Grace, Archbishop William Goh.

I thank God for the **many 'angels' He sent me, for showing me the Light and giving me the courage to say "yes" to "cross the threshold of the burning bush". This indeed is a milestone in my life especially when I was a 'Sunday Catholic'.**

I have now become more prayerful, thankful and I trust completely in God as I continue **on in life's journey. I do not know what lies ahead but I place my trust in Our Lord to lead and guide me. Glory be to God.**

Guiding the Elderly to pray the Divine Mercy in Teochew



Dolly Goh [5th from left] with Bakhita Group LC and Sr. Christine Santhou

Association of Lay Canossians Conference

Sept 2013

Cecilia Chin & Martina Ho

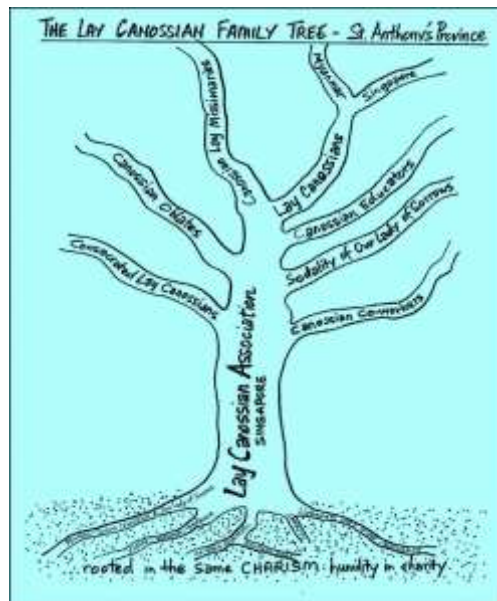
The Association of Lay Canossians (ALC) held its inaugural conference on 14 September 2013, at St Joseph's Home in conjunction with the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The **Vision Ahead** set by Sr. Elizabeth Sim, the National Sister Animator was summed up as follows :

- be **prayerful** centering our life in God,
- be **compassionate** manifesting God's Love to the world, and
- be **creative** using and adapting technology to encounter life and evangelization.

The Lay Canossians are the "extended arms" of the Canossian Sisters Community. The various branches of the Lay Canossian Family Tree are:

- Sodality of our Lady of Sorrows (SOLOS),
- Canossian Lay Missionaries (CLM),
- Lay Canossians (LC),
- Consecrated Lay Canossians (CLC),
- Canossian Oblates,
- Canossian Educators and
- Canossian Co-Workers & Friends.



- The **Sodality of Our Lady of Sorrows** was established on 10 April 1908 and celebrated their 100th Anniversary in September 2008.
- The **Canossian Lay Missionaries** started in 1965 with 'Project Africa' and their mission has extended to home for street children and the slums in Philippines, Chinese refugees in Italy, 'untouchable' community in South India and refugee camps in Malaysia.
- The **Lay Canossians**, also started in 1965, strive to deepen and live their faith through cultivating a humble and joyous lifestyle dedicating time, energy and resources to the service of others. They are involved in parish ministries and outreach programmes to the deprived in our society.
- Beginning from 1986, a small group of **Consecrated Lay Canossians** responded to God's call to live the Canossian charism and spirit, wherever they are, professing the Vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience.
- The **Canossian Oblates** are residents in St Joseph's Home who offer their pains, sufferings and prayers for the Canossian Sisters.



Consecrated Lay
Canossians with Sr.
Rosalia

Canossian Lay Missionaries
with Sr. Geraldine Lim and
Archbishop William Goh



The Conference

Some 70 members from age 30s to late 80s, together with over 20 Canossian Sisters, three from Kluang, including the Provincial Leader of Malaysia, three sisters from Timor Leste, one Malaysian Lay Canossian and Antonia, a Lay Canossian from Myanmar, gathered together at the Conference for the very first time. It was, indeed an opportunity for the Lay Canossians to meet, interact and share their groups' activities.

Sr. Theresa Seow in her opening address said, *"The objective of the Conference is to bring the Canossians together as one to identify with one another and understand who we are."*



Sr. Marilyn Lim presented the theme of the Conference – ***Humility in Charity*** - quoting Pope Pius XI on Magdalene's charity, *"Never fails to descend to the most humble and to share with them not only the material goods of life, but life itself."* It was with this love that St Magdalene left home to enter the charitable institution where she and her companions served the poorest.



As it was the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, **Sr. Rosalia Yeo** touched on the suffering life of Mary. We can connect our pain and sufferings with Mary's and to draw strength from her.



The day ended with the celebration of the Eucharist by Archbishop William Goh and Fr. Ignatius Yeo at the chapel of St Joseph's Home. In his homily, the Archbishop said he had just learnt that the Canossian Sisters are also known as "**Daughters of Charity**". He believes that roping the Oblates and the Lay Canossians to pray for them could be the reason why the Canossian Community is thriving so well here. The Archbishop expressed his gratitude and deep appreciation to the Religious Sisters and their Canossian Team for taking care of the sick and aged, and attending to their demands and needs. He referred specifically to the virtue of "patience"



adding that it was probably why those who are sick and in need of medical attention are referred to as "patients", for this is one very important and essential virtue that all caregivers must possess.

During the enrolment ceremony, nine Canossian Oblates, three Lay Canossians and one Sodality of Our Lady of Sorrows member were welcomed into the Family.



Thank You ... Welcome



The Canossian Sisters thanked Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia for his concern and support throughout the years and welcomed Archbishop William Goh as he took office in May 2013.



Our New Delegate Local Leaders

30 Nov 2013



Sr. Theresa Seow, Provincial Leader presenting Sr. Elizabeth Sim with the decree of nomination for delegate local leader



From L to R

Delegate Local Leader

Sr. Geraldine Tan : St. Joseph Convent

Sr. Janet Wang : Canossian Convent

Sr. Elizabeth Sim : Canossian Formation House



Local Council Members

From L to R

St. Joseph's Home : Sr. Josephine Ng, Sr. Mary Tan & Sr. Geraldine Tan [Local Leader, also in Provincial Council]

Canossian Convent : Sr. Priscilla Ahin, Sr. Rose Low & Sr. Janet Wang [Local Leader, not in picture]

Canossian Formation House : Sr. Elizabeth Sim [Local Leader] & Sr. Doreen Soh [both not in picture]

My vocation story

By Antonia Mya Mya Lone

I came to Singapore from Myanmar on 24 July 2013 to join the Canossian Novitiate. For four months I had to adjust to the food, weather and most importantly, a new language and community living.

More importantly, I had to learn English before I could enter the novitiate. Then I made a three and a half day retreat under Sr. Rosalia Yeo. In the silence of the retreat, I experienced the unconditional love of God, this is a love which can never be compared to any human love. The mystery of my vocation began with the search for the meaning of life. When I did not understand each turning point of my life I have always turned to Mother Mary and, like her, I try to say, "Let it be done according to your will." All the events that happened in my life showed me how much He loves and cares for me and draws me closer to Him. Whenever I am fearful I will remember His consoling words, "Do not be afraid. Nothing is impossible for My Father." This is how I find peace and calm in my heart.

Looking back, I realized that I have spent more than 10 years looking for true happiness. Now I have Christ and He has invited me to love others especially the poor and needy. I have also met St. Magdalene of Canossa whose Institute of Charity does exactly that in order to make Christ known. Indeed I am truly blessed!

During the first vesper of Advent 30 Nov 2013, I made an official request to join this Institute before our Provincial Council. Witnessed by the community of Sisters and Lay Canossians, I was given a medal to signify acceptance. I thank God for giving me such a big grace to follow Him closely as a religious. I give my heartfelt thanks to the Institute for welcoming me into the Canossian family and to all who have shown me so much care, love and patience.

Antonia enters the Novitiate

30 Nov 2013



Antonia Mya Mya Lone , the second Myanmar novice, receives her medal from Sr. Theresa Seow, Provincial Leader.

Antonia's entry is witnessed by the Sisters in the community and congratulated by Lay Canossians present.



Antonia with novice Maria Ja Awn also from Myanmar, Adeline Lourdes Tan & Sr. Jessica Teo, the Novice Mistress [left] with Lay Canossians [below]



'Come and See'

By Ann Tran



Sr. Dorothy,

7 Dec 2013

I trust that you are doing very well. Thanks again for showing me around Singapore. I really appreciate it. I am not really good with words but this is my reflection on my "Come and see experience" in Singapore.

I didn't know what to expect as this is the first time I felt so inclined to do something that received so much resistance from my family. My circumstance was actually not ideal for such a trip. However, after I arrived in Singapore and after my meeting with the Canossian Sisters, the insights I gained from this experience was priceless!

As God has promised that if you seek Him, you shall find Him. That promise was fulfilled in me as I saw God in every single person I met here and His timing is always perfect no matter how unlikely it seemed at that moment.

Not only did I find that the Canossian Sisters have discovered the secret to the fountain of youth - cosmetic companies should really do research on these extraordinary women - but the Sisters also have showed me through their ministries 'joy in suffering'. The sacrifices they make and their dedication to God have no

doubt changed many lives directly and indirectly. Also through the ripple effect they have even inspired the hardened hearts. I know it has impressed me profoundly.

I strongly encourage those who have even the slightest desire to try the "come and see" experience and see for themselves if what they are searching for can be found within the prayer labyrinth. If not, I am sure they will be led to what they are searching for.

Thank you Sr. Dot and all the Canossian Sisters.

Ann



Having tea and a friendly discussion with Sisters at Canossa Convent, Sallim Road

The Journey of my Religious Calling

*Sharing by Adeline Lourdes Tan on Vocation Sunday 2013
at Nativity Church*

Good morning my dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

My name is Adeline, I am a Novice with the Canossian Daughters of Charity, meaning I am under training, in formation, learning to be a Sister.

I worked in the pharmaceutical and retail management industries and I enjoyed what I was doing. However, there was something missing. Often in my meditation, in silence, this emptiness became louder and stronger. It lingered in my heart. Eventually with God's grace, I decided to do something, I responded. It was not easy for me. The journey was filled with hesitation, struggles, fear of the unknown and insecurities. At the same time, it was also a journey full of joy, excitement, assurances, peace and love.

Looking back, I recalled how God has saved me from near mishaps. He was also very real in my daily life, allowing me to catch buses and taxis on time, granting good weather for my activities and helping me to manage my work well. Having experienced the goodness of God and His love for me, the question is, "How do I want to live my life to the fullest?"

During my "Come & See" experience, I was given a period of 2 months to stay with the Sisters to experience community life. It allowed me to come in contact with the Sisters: their way of life as they pray and share meals together. I got to know the Sisters at a deeper level and saw how they proclaim the Good News through their persons and ministries. I was very touched to see how the Sisters accompany the many people in their search for meaning and direction in life by making Jesus known to them. I realized that my personal charism in wanting to share the love of Jesus resembles the Canossian charism. I also witnessed how this group of women come together for a common vision and mission for the love of Christ Crucified. This was exactly what I was

looking for. I felt I have discovered a priceless pearl and suddenly, all other things became secondary. I shared with my family my feelings and life in the convent. It changed their perception of religious life. As time passed, they gave me their love and blessing for my choice of life.

At this point of time in my discernment, I just know and feel that I am being called to be a religious. I am aware that in this process, there is no absolute certainty. However, this journey is leading me to a deeper self-discovery, healing and more importantly, purifying my motives in committing myself to God in answering His call.

As I come to the end of my sharing, I would like to leave you with an image of a darkened cave symbolizing the unknowns in my journey. With the grace of God in every step I take, He has shed His light and showed me how beautiful this journey can be. It is like discovering a waterfall at the end of the cave with an enchanting garden beyond it. I believe, trust and am hopeful because in Matthew 28, it states, "and surely I am with you always, to the end of time."

Finally I wish each and everyone of you a fruitful journey with our Lord. Thank you and God bless.



Adeline Lourdes Tan with Maria Ja Awn, her fellow novice from Myanmar & Sr Jessica Teo, their Novice Mistress [photo on left] and the novices with the Provincial Council [photo on right]

A Tribute to our dearest Mother Bruna a Canossian Missionary, educator, artist & writer

by Sr. Janet Wang

At 8:05 pm, October 21st, 2013, M. Bruna, daughter of Pietro Bossi and Teresa Gobetti of Milan, Italy died at the age 95 in Manila. From 1939 – 2013 - a good 74 years, she lived her consecrated life as a Canossian Sister, a Missionary, a journey which began on November 26, 1946 when she was sent to Singapore where she served for 25 years.



M. Bruna taught so many of us in St. Anthony's Convent Secondary School at 111 Middle Rd. We remember her very fondly as our art teacher, counsellor and friend. We enjoyed chatting with her when we stayed back for our art class in the afternoon. We were touched by her love for us, by her joyfulness and her zest for life. Her deep love for God was reflected in her ready smile and generous dedication as a teacher. I still remember how gleefully she pranced on the trampoline when it was first set up in the school quadrangle!

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M. Bruna was also a very observant person. She lived through a time of turmoil in our country which was then on the road to transformation from being a colony with many divided ethnic groups to a one united people of Singapore. M. Bruna would recall and make an astute political analysis in her second book "Pursuing a Dream", which she wrote in 1994, when she was 76 years old, using the pen name Burney Brine. One of her concluding statements was: "I am

proud to be a Singaporean and equally proud to be part of the working class.”

She then continued her mission in the Philippines in 1971, at the Canossian School in Lipa where she served for 13 years. From there she was sent to begin the House of Spirituality in Tagaytay and then for a short time in Cagayan de Oro, in Jakarta, Indonesia, in Italy and finally, in 2011, in HIYAS, the Philippine province’s newly built home for the elderly.

Here are the remarkable – significant insights in her life that I wish to recall and remember these words were written and recorded by M. Bruna herself. Earlier in 1989, at age 71, when most people ordinarily retire, M. Bruna embarked on the first of her two book projects: *Dreams and Visions, Memoirs of a Happy Nun*, 1989. We will let her speak through her writings:

A Dreamer – *“My life is full of dreams. Dreams have been the torch of my life. My dreams touch the reality of my life. My night dreams give me enlightenment and joy and my day dreams give me not only pleasure but troubles, pains and tears as well. ... Today, people have forgotten to smile for they have forgotten how to dream. ...Dream is the breath of life, the trampoline to inventions, the dawn to a happy future. He who does not know how to dream does not know how to love.”*

Vision – *“There is a vision of beauty in my mind that fills the universe. There is a song of joy in my heart that harmonizes with the whole creation. There is a mighty wave of goodness among men making them one in love, the transcendent love of the Father. To live and walk towards a vision of simplicity and self-freedom is a tremendous task but it is a dream worth living for. Lord, give us the grace to know ourselves and be happy with and of what we are, that in simplicity, we may find peace and happiness.”*

Surrender – *“To lie and sleep as dead buried in your will, O Lord is the climax, the ecstasy of love, the prelude to heavenly bliss, the sublime poverty of the heart, the abundance of a treasure that overflows in quietude and peace to enrich others.”*

As she wrote, so she lived, especially in the growing contemplative silence of her last years of life. M. Bruna would simply gaze and speak only when really necessary or when asked repeatedly. Somehow, she knew and lived the cross of daily living and as the body degenerated more and more, so her spirit soared quietly. From alumnae and friends, as soon as news of her death became known, testimonies poured in.

Testimonies:

- **Jackie Lim Poh Suan:** “Taught by M. Bruna in the 1960s at SAC Singapore. I remember her passion and zest for art. I love her art lessons...She is now with St. Magdalene our foundress and Our Lord. She is praying for the Canossians whom she loved so much here.
- **Amelita:** “I had fun memories of M. Bruna during my 20 years in Canossa. She inspired me so much with her being artistic, creative, crafty and ‘yes’ those birth choreographic ideas during our huge musical productions. M. Bruna was always smiling and never for a moment did I ever catch her having a bad day. Thank you Mother Bruna for the inspiration.”
- And many others ...





It was apt that the memorial mass for M. Bruna was held at St Joseph's Church Victoria Street.

It was at St Anthony's Convent, 111 Middle Road where she taught Art to young girls and made Jesus known to them.



Sr. Elizabeth Tham [far left]
M. Bruna [front row, far right]

Through M. Bruna many got baptized and a few joined the Canossian Sisters. M. Bruna could have inspired our Sr. Elizabeth Tham too.



Remembering

Sr. Elizabeth Law, 94, who
passed away peacefully
on 5th November 2013

at St. Joseph's Canossian Convent

by Sr. Dorothy Lim

Sr. Elizabeth led an exemplary and inspiring life. Steeped in piety – she meditated daily on the Good News, asking the **Sisters what the Gospel passage was about when she couldn't** read properly. She invoked the Holy Spirit for many of her concerns.

Undeterred by her physical handicap, she wheeled herself to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet daily at 3 pm in the chapel. After tea, she would spend time reading the newspapers. There was discipline and regularity in all her actions.

Sr. Elizabeth was a prayerful inspiration. She kept in touch with her friends and relatives, offering her encouragement and prayer. She also shared self-reflexology techniques with the visitors, nurses and friends in the Home.

One of her regular visitors was Edmund, whom she met years ago. He came with his wife, Nancy and daughter, Joy, bringing food that Sr. Elizabeth liked. She had good appetite until the last few days before her passing. The family was grateful for her prayers, advice and concern.

Another regular visitor was Tony Tay. He would invite her and the Sisters every year on her birthday for a meal. His wife, Mary expressed her gratitude for the love



Tony and volunteers cooking for Willing Hearts

and care Sr. Elizabeth showed Tony when he was young. It helped him to be who he is today. In a ST. newspaper article, he shared that it was the Canossians who helped him grow to be a **caring person. Through his “Willing Hearts” project, and with the help of many volunteers, Tony currently offers free meals for thousands of hungry people.**

Some of the Sisters who were present at her bedside praying with her, during her last moments, saw how beautifully she passed on, breathing her last, with serenity and calm. Her last written words were:

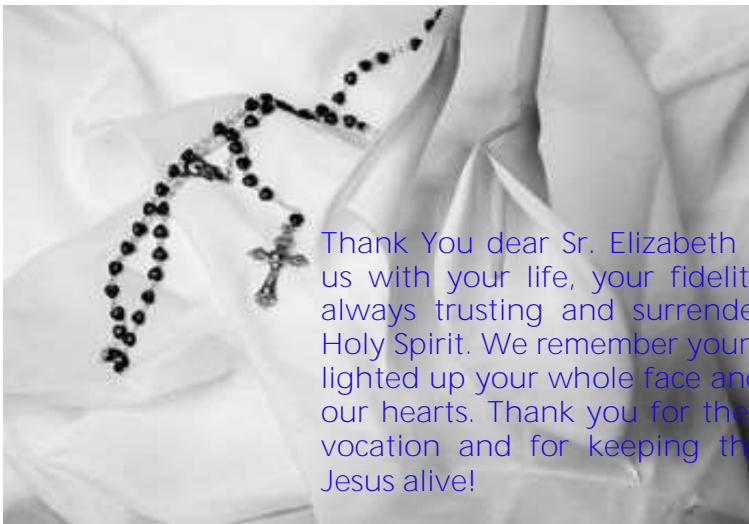


*My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
The Almighty works marvels for me,
Holy is His name.*

I ask forgiveness from everyone. May His Will be done in all things. Give thanks to Yahweh our God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In her will, this is her request for the verse on the niche :

“To you, my Lord, I surrender all”.



Thank You dear Sr. Elizabeth for inspiring us with your life, your fidelity to prayer, always trusting and surrendering to the Holy Spirit. We remember your smile which lighted up your whole face and gladdened our hearts. Thank you for the gift of your vocation and for keeping the Flame for Jesus alive!



Sr. Maria Casarotti shares 'fruits of labour' from St. Joseph's Home



At the beginning of this year, the residents in our Home, Peter, Joseph and Mary, who have no relatives, requested to be baptized.

They knew about the faith through the Catholic environment of St Joseph's Home as well as their contacts with the Catholic staff and visitors. One of the residents has the habit of stopping to pray before the picture of St. Josephine Bakhita. He has also expressed the desire to have the same name *Bakhita*, for like her, he has the gift of faith in Jesus. Another resident was inspired by a good friend and the third decided to be a Catholic because of a very kind and gentle partner who shared the same dinner table in the Home. Soon after they received instruction in the faith through a Catechist. They were baptized and confirmed in our chapel by our Parish Priest on 29 May 2013.



A thank you note from a retreatant at LIFESPRINGS

Appreciation

*As I depart from this place
I just want to say I appreciate God's
grace,
For a son gone far and lost,
Due to the business meant to be
serving God.
I must say coming for the retreat is
good,
It helps me let go of my sin, burden
and load.
I want to thank God , my Saviour
and my Lord,
For receiving me into this house, his
fold , his flocks.
Now with ease of mind, heart and
conscience,
I will be able to serve Him with
renewed strength.
Thank you Lord for a peaceful place
That I to this place can come and
enjoy peace.
Till the next quarter I shall return,
Hopefully with fruitful report to YOU I
churn.*



*Pastor Vincent
Oct 2013*

*Let's end the Year of
Faith with this prayer*



“...to rediscover the beauty of the journey of faith begun on the day of our Baptism ... to reach its ultimate end - ‘our full encounter with God’, and throughout which the Holy Spirit purifies us, lifts us up and sanctifies us, so that we may enter into the happiness for which our hearts long.”

Pope Francis on 24 Nov 2013