

CANOZEST

Issue 4: October- December 2011

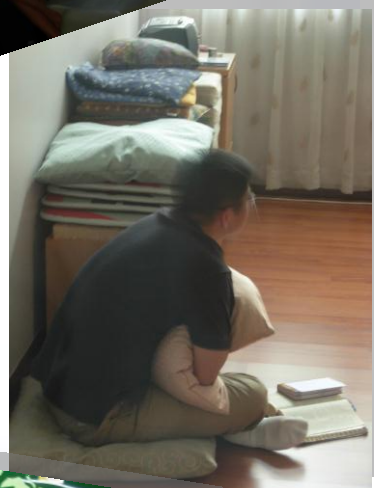
The last quarter of the year is not merely a time to go through our resolutions for 2011 and to fulfil whatever was undone. It is to start preparing ourselves holistically so as to travel to Bethlehem to welcome the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ..

Journeying towards Bethlehem..

October- Emmaus Walk (EW) Exco Recollection

On a day when most people would sleep in till late morning, a group of young adults made their way to the Canossian House in Lor Low Koon for a time of prayer and reflection. It was a day of recollection for the leaders of the young adults community in Nativity Church, Emmaus Walk. Sr Jessica, who had been journeying with the youths and young adults in the parish, had prepared the day's spiritual and 'physical' inputs, with the help of Sr Geraldine. We were led through a reflection and discussion of the Good Shepherd, given quiet time for reflection on Scripture, and then treated to a movie after lunch. The movie was based on a book called "The Gift", and it spoke to us about the things we took for granted and should be grateful for. We also liked that there was quiet time for us to be by ourselves to pray, or to talk to one another if the Lord prompts us to. All in all, it was a simple and frills-free retreat. We ate a humble lunch of sandwiches and had our sessions in a bare-ly decorated classroom. Nonetheless, there were many learning moments throughout the day, and all of us went home with a sense of having renewed our relationship with God and with each other.

-Amanda Lim



The Dignity & Price of Each Human Person (Human Trafficking)

The Dignity of Each Human Person (Human Trafficking)

Human trafficking sounds so remote. However when someone passed me pamphlet about it, I was interested. A few days later, Sr Jessica invited me to a movie cum sharing session about human trafficking. I was very interested. After the session, I am convinced that the problem is closer to home than we know it.

"With drugs, they can only sell it once. But with a human slave, they can sell it again and again," the ICE chief said in the movie. This is the horrible truth about this trade and that is what makes it so profitable. The sad thing is that it is exploiting such human virtues as love and generosity. The hold these traffickers have on their slaves is the slaves' love for their loved ones. They threaten to harm their loved ones if they do not comply.

What can we do to stop this evil? If there is no demand, there is no supply. One form of trafficking is that of human organs. If you buy an organ from a black market in a third world country, be aware that the owner of that organ be might be dead as a result of giving up that organ. Are our lives more precious than theirs?

Another very common form of trafficking is that of women and children for the flesh trade. The girls usually do not live long after a few years of physical and sexual abuse. So when you turn on the Internet to visit one of the pornographic sites, be aware that there is a human being in intense suffering. Please do not perpetuate this evil.

The worst way of abiding by this evil is to seek the service of these women and children. 'But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.' (Matthew 18:6-7)

— By Ana Bao



Nativity

Year End Retreat



Before the retreat, in my 2 years in JC, I didn't put God first in my life. I was very busy with schoolwork and distracted by unimportant things and therefore did not pray much during the weekdays.

In EYR, I got the opportunity for quiet time to pray and reflect on my life, in front of the Blessed Sacrament. I also learnt a lot about Catholic beliefs and our relationship with God during the sessions given by Bro Jo. One thing I learnt was that feelings can be misleading. Another thing I learnt was that after we return from the retreat, we will still face the same problems and tensions in our life. But it is the way we approach the problems that changes, whether we ask God to guide us when we face the problems. I also learnt that it is important to start discerning about my life, to pray to God to ask Him what He wants me to do with the life He gave me.

During the last day of the retreat, we were asked to pick a piece of paper from a basket. On the paper contained the name of a Saint who we are encouraged to know more about, and ask for his or her intercession, in the following year. The Saint on the paper I picked was St Rose of Lima, the patron Saint of vanity and suffering, which happened to be 2 main issues in my life in recent months.

The praying over by the facilitators was also very healing. I was struck by what one of my facilitators said, that "despite the problems in life, God knows what is best for us".

Also, during the retreat, Sister Jessica has been very caring and I really appreciate the advice she gave me regarding a problem I faced in 2011.

Overall, through EYR, I was reminded of the need to place God as the center of my life, and that I should set aside some time each day to pray and read the Bible.

EYR was a good way for me to end the year 2011.

-Marie Siew

Watching and Waiting 2012 From Advent to Epiphany



Week 1: Stay awake- who and how? Where? When? Why?
(HOPE)

Week 2: Stay awake! Look at John the Baptist. (FAITH)



Week 3: Stay awake! Look at Mary.
(LOVE)



Week 4: Stay awake! Look at Jesus.
(JOY)



Epiphany:
Stay awake! Bring Light
to the World. (Peace)



In preparation for the birth of Christ

Advent Season



Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Baby Jesus. It is a time for me to reflect and review for what I have done within this 1 year. For me, Christmas means new life. By His grace, I can start my life all a new again. I leave behind all the burdens that chain me and look forward to the birth of Jesus that gives me new hope.

For this Christmas, I thank God for lighting up my desire to serve Him again. After graduated from university, I have rested for more than 6 months without serving Him in community. I realized that my heart feels empty and i found that my faith not growing. And my resolution for this year is to go back to community to serve Him and deepen my faith again. I really thank God for this. He does not leave me behind even when I went away from Him. He does not give up on me even I often betray Him. Thanks be to God.

with love in Christ,

Irene

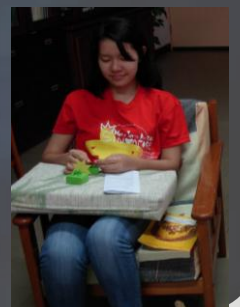


The Advent Prayer that I experienced has brought me closer to Jesus and our Father. I understand more about the meaning of Advent and was able to maintain the advent mood until Christmas. Usually Advent was not that meaningful for me, because I did not know how important is to wait, reflect, and long for Christ to come. I know Advent means waiting, but I was not distracted by our worldly meaning of Xmas, such as Xmas parties, presents, and sales. However, being able to pray together every week during Advent had enriched me. I am glad to be able to take part, and the sharing had opened my eyes.

Thank you very much :)

Love,

Risela



In preparation for the birth of Christ

Advent Season



My advent journey is an experience that i never expected to be this warm, this joyful and stirring. When Jomai invited me, i said sure because i thought this was one of those activities whereby one volunteers to go to a convent or hospice to clean and bring joy to other people. It turned out that this activity is a journey. My first time to hear this thing here in Singapore. I heard about advent. I love journeys. But when you put them together its like a spiritual journey. This fact only dawned on me during our first session. Staying awake! This first session cuts my knots of faith to a spiritual awakening.

I learned the meaning of awake in a spiritual perspective. I know the meaning of awake physically but not emotionally and spiritually. My journey has been made interesting because of this knowledge. I felt a sense of awareness to check myself am i really awake or just doing what nature has instructed.

After that session, i felt different, warm and light. And i told myself i will come back next week.

The journey towards this second session was a bit rough for me. It was raining so hard. I was torn between staying in the comfort of my bed and snuggle in that cold weather or go out there and feel that lightness again. I knew that the first session had so much impact on me that i need to continue this journey.

Though i was late, the second session proved to be worth getting out of bed in a cold weather. It talked about the image of John, his purpose and what it means for us. For me, since I've made it a point to be awaken, open and see things beyond its physical meaning, i came to appreciate John more.. I just know John from children's bible books, a very

important and significant man. But during this session, i knew John's purpose and what is its significance meaning for us.

My journey stopped there. Yes, stopped, simply hanging. I'm sad that my sail is like a broken one.. I am only willing to go for 2 kilometers or maybe 10miles. But my journey though incomplete, nevertheless, it has moved! I may not able to attend the other sessions, but with these two sessions i was being got "pushed" a little bit, to look at my faith, be challenged. My journey may not have been where it should be, but i am not where i used to be.. I have moved! I thank the cannossian sisters for this. I pray to God that He continues to rock my sail so I'll not be stagnant spiritually. And i pray that He sends me His Spirit, so that i may sail closer to Him.

PS: i only got to hang 2 faith decorations in that beautiful advent tree, when i could have hung 10 more and made it more beautiful and colourful. But those 2, reminded me that I've lifted all my desires and goals to God and i am just here waiting for Him to fulfil them all. In His time, in His way...



Awake and waiting,

Sugar

Watching and Waiting 2012

Epiphany



When I think back on the retreat, my heart just filled up and overflowed with his love. It was similar to the sensation/feeling I had while reading the love letter from God. It was as though nothing else mattered – not my weaknesses, sins; not the memories & experiences – happy, sad or otherwise; not even what I had accomplished nor my strengths. It's probably my version of experiencing being "on the mountain" – God is with me, in me, and I'm in Him – and nothing else mattered except this.

Unfortunately, like Peter, I too, could not stay indefinitely on the mountain and had to "come down" back into reality. Where things like strengths and weaknesses mattered. It's hard, and I find myself distracted (during the encounter) with thoughts of "how am I going to cope with it" rather than fully savouring the experience/encounter. And I'll regret it later for worrying about things that are yet to come.

But (allow me to hesitate for a moment, I'm still learning to recognize and apply this phrase to my life) by the grace of God, He made this decision to appear in me: "Anxiety/worry has no role to play at this current moment, I want to focus right now. So, I'll set it aside and deal with it later." And I managed it without a struggle, which thinking back, is a miracle because I'm a worrywart. Thus I say it's a God given grace since I really can't think of anything else that can describe this.

This is one of the things I want to take away from the recollection (the encounter, the many gifts I realize I have and that I can offer them up as the 3 kings did, and the many gifts – most of all, Jesus Himself – I received in return). This is a precedent, this is MY precedent, from which I can draw strength from when I need to set aside my worry for the future/things I cannot control.

I am grateful that God called me to join the Epiphany Recollection.

And yes, "gratefulness" is one of the gifts I find myself growing in since last year or so. I'm grateful that God gifted me with "gratefulness"! And a sense of humour to laugh at myself.

-Brigid



*On a day like any other
In our search to find the truth
We turned so many musty pages
In our hope to find some clue
We will search and we will follow
No matter how far
We know where to start
To find the king whose kingdom is the heart*

Verses adapted from lyrics of song: We will find Him (Witnesses)

