



*The President's message*  
*From my heart to yours...*

In my opening address at the CC19 party this year, I showed a photo of a huge 140-year-old tree with a trunk almost 13 feet in circumference and branches that supported a canopy 88 feet wide – Humongous! The roots must have gone so deep for it to weather winds and storms. It's foundation, good soil.

Liken too our education, we stemmed from a strong root system, our foundation grounded in the Canossian charism and values. Through the years of loving tending by our educators, the Canossian tree has produced thousands of women of grace, integrity, passion and respect. We are now the branches, leaves and flowers of that huge tree.

The more beautiful a plant, the more tending needed. Soil, water, nutrients, sunshine and occasionally some useful pruning. It isn't difficult to predict the beauty of a budding blossom, when we have seen the blooms. More so, when we know the efforts which have gone into the growth.

In this issue, we showcase the beautiful people of Canossa – a Canossian Sister, a ministry worker, volunteers at the CAA events and our young Alumnae who are paying it forward. All tended by the caring hands of their educators who loved, inspired and believed in them. Each one of them showing off the beauty of their lives in the outreach and the work they do now.

In a recent partnership with SACPS, a team of our "Millennial" Alumnae returned to the primary school to talk about their careers. At the end of the sessions, many of the little girls ran up to hug the speakers. It was heartening to witness that spontaneous appreciation and admiration. You only admire beautiful things, don't you? The girls saw the blooms of love in their seniors.

We are those blooms of a healthy Canossian tree whose branches have stretched out and enjoyed the Son-shine. Stay rooted in the Spirit of Canossa and we shall continue to bloom beautifully – for a long time to come!

Via Veritas Vita

Canossians' Connection – the Official Newsletter of the Canossian Alumni Association (2019)

## CANOSSIANs' CONNECTION



**Canossian  
Alumni**

### Objectives of the Canossian Alumni Association

i) to strengthen the network of former students of the Canossian schools and to develop a true spirit of loyalty and love for the Alma Mater.

ii) to be a channel of collaboration between the former students, the Canossian schools and the society at large.

### Executive Committee

President : Veronica Tan

Vice President : Joan Teo Li Sian

Secretary : Jeraldine Lee

Asst Secretary : Frances Wong

Treasurer : Cecilia Nathen

Asst Treasurer : Martina Wong

Committee Members :

Nazhath Faheema

Janelene Leong

Jasmine Soh

Martha Fernandez

Sylvia Chua

### Spiritual Director

Sr Louisa Lim

## Faces & Places - Sr Marilyn Lim. Celebrating 50 Years of Religious Life



*Sr Marilyn Lim recently celebrated her Jubilee as a Canossian Sister and she shares her 'adventurous' and faithful journey as a Canossian student, teacher and nun.*

Presently based at Canossian Convent at Jalan Merbok, Sr Marilyn recounts, "I have come full circle! I did my Novitiate here 50 years ago!" She is now involved with the Lifesprings Canossian Spirituality Centre,

where she is one of the resident Spiritual directors to accompany those who come for retreats.

As the 4<sup>th</sup> of 9 children, she was schooled at St Anthony's Convent, Middle Road. Her parents, migrants from China, chose to send their 6 daughters to SAC and 3 sons to St Anthony's Boys' School. She recalls that school was her second home. Her fondest memories were those of the morning assembly, starting the day with prayer and the singing of hymns. The daily catechism classes by the Sisters where she learned Christian values through the lives of saints and bible stories were moments she looked forward to.

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"I was intrigued by the nuns walking to St Joseph's Church in two files every morning for mass in their immaculate white habit and flowing black veil. Something stirred in me; can I be one of them one day?"

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Together with the late Louise Lee, her classmate, they started formal catechism classes with Sr Joy Shelley and were baptised in 1966 by Fr Bata in St. Joseph's Church.

During those school-girl days, she was inspired by Sr Carmen Dengah, Principal; and Sr Joy Shelley, her form teacher in Sec 2. She was touched by the unconditional love and devotion of these missionary Sisters. They were joyful witnesses and had a great attention for the poor and marginalized.

Entering the convent in 1969, at the age of 22 after completing Teachers' training, was a tough call for her to make. Her parents, being Buddhists, found it hard to understand her decision and her mum had expected that she would always be there for the family, especially after her father was diagnosed with cancer.




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"It was a very difficult decision, but I knew God was calling and He would look after the family better than I ever could."

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It took her family almost 20 years to come to terms with her vocational choice. Her return at a Chinese New Year reunion dinner in 1988 ended the long "wait". There she felt the overwhelming peace and joy of the family - beyond words.



When she was a teacher at SACSS, Sr Marilyn taught Math, Science and Art. She was form teacher and loved teaching. She particularly enjoyed the rapport with the students whom she came to know personally, especially the weaker ones.

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*"It was a great consolation to be with the girls in class - to enthuse them with knowledge and truth."*

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"As I was one of the youngest on the staff, Mother Natalia Tasca, the Principal, assigned me to go for National Army Cadet Officers' Training and together with another colleague. We started the school's National Army Cadet unit in school. So, I did my National Service!" she declared.

After some years of teaching in school, she was sent to be trained in theology, counselling and

formation of candidates to the religious life in India. There she had the rare opportunity to attend the Sadhana course under Jesuit Father Anthony De Mello.



In 1980, she returned to Singapore to take her Final Vows, after which, she assumed the responsibility of

training the aspirants and postulants at "Joyville", a pre-war house at Highland Road.

In 1990, Sr Marilyn was mandated to Rome to serve in the Canossian International Headquarters in Rome. "Here I encountered the big Canossian world as Sisters from 30 countries were sent regularly for formation courses in our Canossian spirituality and charism. I had the privilege to learn Italian and be able to access the original writings of our Foundress St. Magdalene and with a small team, translate some of the letters and documents for the English-speaking world."

In 2002, she was elected to be part of the General Council where she visited all the Canossian Communities of the world to meet the Sisters in their



distinctive cultures and ministries and to encourage them to be faithful to the Canossian charism. "It was very humbling meeting the poor in so many parts of the world who lived with so little and yet were so happy and trusting in the heavenly Father who created them."

When asked what message she'd like to give the readers of this article, she said

"I would like to share my joy in the God of life who has invited me to live this adventure of Religious vocation as a Canossian Sister. May you also be blessed with the grace of seeking the Way, the Truth and the Life as we "courageously, with heads held high, we march ever on through life"! May Mary our Mother protect and guide you on your life's journey!"

The CAA congratulates you on your 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and wish you much blessing for many more years of love and service! ✠



## Faces & Places – Cassilda Lim. The love and belief that lifted her.



*It's hard to imagine Cassilda Lim, Executive Director of the Catholic Spirituality Centre, as a moody, rebellious teenager when she was in secondary school. She credits who she is today to a teacher who challenged and believed in her, good friends who stood by her and she is thankful for the very fact that her parents had sent her to a Canossian school.*

Cassilda spent 10 years in the Canossian education system from CCPS to SACSS between 1987 to 1996. She was one who had the privilege of growing up

in three of the Canossian campuses – from the lush grounds at Sallim Road, to experiencing “quaint” SAC at Middle Road where there was that closeness everyone felt to one another during recess in the quadrangle, to enjoying the spanking new and huge school at Bedok.

As a young child, she was extroverted, mischievous and adventurous, but getting into the teen years were tough as she found it hard to make and keep friends and struggled relationally. A self-professed late bloomer, she said it was Sr Margaret Goh, her history teacher from Sec 2 to Sec 4, who was the wind beneath her wings. “She saw potential in me, past my poor attitudes and she kept challenging and pushing me to do my best. Now, I realise the positive impact of having a mentor speak belief and encouragement to a younger person.”

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“In her, I felt the concrete expression of love and belief, which led me to believe in myself and to work hard.”

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Thanks to Sr Margaret’s influence, Cassilda went on to major in History and Political Science at NUS. Later, she felt the call to get trained in Pastoral Counselling and did her Master’s in Theological Studies. Her path led her to work in youth ministries, at the civil service and eventually, getting into full-time service at the Catholic Archdiocese.

“The greatest gift I received from CCPS and SAC was the Catholic faith and education. My parents were non-Catholics but they chose to send my older sister and I to

CCPS because of their confidence in the Canossian school’s ethos and values. At school, I learned to pray, sang hymns, attended Mass, read the bible. I always felt like I belonged to this Family of God.” She was baptized when she was 12 years old.




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“God has an incredible purpose for us and He’s always inviting us to partner and serve with His Spirit.”

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At CSC now, she works with a team of dedicated staff and volunteers to run spiritual retreats and programmes. She is also involved in spiritual formation where she teaches spiritual and faith topics and ministers to people.



When asked if she’d ever thought of being a nun, she affirmed that she felt the call from God at a very young age, but not as a religious sister.

“God can use any life, in any season, at any age to bring wonders to and through us, as long as we are willing to surrender and commit ourselves to Him. God is inviting us to bring about his kingdom here on earth.” ✠

## 1<sup>st</sup> May at St Joseph's Home – Labour Days that are never the same again

*Little is known that our annual visits to St Joseph's Home goes beyond what meets the eye and the planning of this 3-hour May-Day event takes a lot more than just a snap of the fingers.*

For some people, they look at this CAA annual visit every 1<sup>st</sup> of May and say – “Aiya, every year, the same – Warm up, crafts, sing-along and lunch – nothing new, so why bother?” Well, yes – and no!



This year, Exco member, Janelene Leong led 30 volunteers to get 70 residents to create colourful art pieces. Designs in the form of words and patterns were created using masking tape on canvas. Then residents were assisted to fill in poster colours using sponges or brushes. The masking tapes were then peeled off after the paint dried and, viola – beautiful posters!

**What *really* goes into the 3-hour visits?**

A few days prior, the organizing team will meet to prepare the materials and get a hands-on feel on what the art process is going to be like for the residents. The crafts needed to be sensory - challenging their



concentration & motor skills, yet the process simple and materials carefully selected - so strong glues, pins and extremely small beads are out of the question!

The craftwork that the residents accomplish provides them with freedom of expression and a sense of achievement. Over the years, they've worked on weaving paper, free-style drawing, finger painting, as well as decorating photo-frames with stickers and sequins.

The Lunch. Caterers are usually contacted a month ahead and menu gets selected. Is bee-hoon going to pose difficulty in swallowing? Can we serve fish – any

danger of accidentally choking on bones? Prawns -with or without tail? What about allergies? Simple is not easy.

As for entertainment, we were always blessed to have magicians offering mind-blowing illusions and many SAC songbirds who can belt out oldies in Chinese & English. Of course, You-tube Karaoke is another go-to resource! Connection with the residents is important. The husky guffaws and toothless smiles after that, priceless.

*So why does this May 1<sup>st</sup> visit mean so much to the CAA?*



In commemoration of St Joseph the Worker, it affirms us that all work is an offering of our whole being. Three short hours as an event, but a lot more “work” beforehand –

of the volunteers whose hands, heart and minds have labored.

It is a reminder of the circle of life – as a child depends on the care and concerns of adults looking after him, these frail elderly folks would depend on the consideration and compassion that go into the planning by the team.

Lastly, this isn't just all about us giving to them - but each of these lovely souls giving us something back. Wisdom, patience, joy and a heart full of gratitude.

Try it next year, and your Labour Days will never be the same again. ✦



## School Partnership – SACPS Career Awareness Day

*For the very first time, a Career Awareness Day initiative was planned for Primary 5 students at SACPS as part of the Education and Career Guidance (ECG) effort, with 7 alumnae of SACSS on hand to share their career experiences.*



On May 3rd this year, over 200 girls had a chance to hear about the various careers that their Canossian “seniors” embarked on and what it takes to carve a good vocation.

“This event was organized to create awareness for the P5

students. It aimed to help the girls learn about the diverse career options through the provision of accurate and comprehensive information.” said Mdm Audra Cardoza, teacher-in-charge for the Career Awareness Day.

Exco member Jasmine Soh, was the liaison for this partnership event and she connected 7 of our graduates of SACSS from the 2000s. In attendance were Abigail Yeo, a Medical Technologist at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Alicia de Souza, a Speech and Language Therapist; Azriana Aziz, an Instructor at Outward Bound School; Caroline Liew, a Stage Manager at The Esplanade; Lin Chan, a Centre Manager at a Pre-School; Nikki Chua, entrepreneur & co-founder of Retailers’ Market; and Sonia Chew, a Mediacorp Artist.



Awareness Day and acknowledged her thanks to the



Starting off the morning, Mrs Chin Lai Yoke, Principal of SACPS, officially opened the Career

contributors. Veronica Tan, President of CAA, in her address, invited the girls to draw inspiration from St Magdalene to consider work that is of love and service to others.

The girls literally had a field day. They were grouped in classes of 40 and rotated to visit various classrooms attending 40-minute sessions run by the individual guests. In the later part of the day, they gathered at a forum-like setting where they were free to ask questions about any of the careers presented. The girls were open and candid – and surely, one of the thrilling highlights was to be able to get up close and personal with a celebrity radio personality, Sonia Chew – who was a Canossian student for 10 years!



having been inspired to follow their heart and the Canossian charism of loving service to others.

This platform of collaboration proved an effective way to have ex-students re-connect with our Alma Mater and contribute in partnership to the schools; and the CAA will certainly be doing more of these in the coming years. ✚





## Canossians Connect 2019 - Kampung Days

*The biennial Canossians Connect tea party on Saturday, 1 June 2019 commemorated 140 years of Canossian education in Singapore.*



True to the theme, Kampung Party, many in the 250-odd crowd arrived at Concorde Hotel attired in the fashion of days gone by, which ranged from

rustic to exotic – samfu, saris and sarongs!

The foyer was already alive even before the start of the tea party, as alumni, friends and family mingled while visiting the various booths set

up for sale of items, games and souvenir photo-taking, including taking shots with a live snake!



Our Canossian sisters started the ball rolling with a fitting grand entrance together with the school principals.

This was followed by a sterling percussion performance by students from the Canossian school.

We also had 13 of our ex-students from the Canossian School (formerly known as the Canossian School for the Deaf) in attendance.

This is the first time they are joining us after the CAA constitution was amended



to offer CAA membership to the Canossian School, in addition to the 3 mainstream schools. An interpreter was engaged to provide the sign translation and the deaf guests had a wonderful time.



Emcee Dennis Chee then stepped in to rah-rah the participants for the rest of the afternoon. Everyone enthusiastically took part in the Canossian

education trivia, the games, mass dance and the lucky draw.

Performer Ming also set everyone roaring with laughter with her humour in English, Malay, Mandarin, Hokkien and Cantonese and at the same time entertained with a few evergreen songs.



The 140th year commemoration would not be complete without the presence of our teachers, both past and present, in our midst. The alumni had

the opportunity to catch up with their teachers and reminisce about school days.

The celebration ended with a high note. True to form, Mrs Christine Kanagarajah, our former music teacher and composer of our school song, brought the event to a rousing end with the signature singing of our school song.

✦





## What's Happening Soon – CAA AGM 2019 & Candle Making Workshop

**Date : Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**Time (Workshop) : 2.30pm – 4pm**

**Time (AGM) : 4pm – 5pm**

Venue : Canossaville Children & Community Service, Dining Canteen.  
1 Sallim Road, Gate 3 (Closest to St Stephen's Church, Mattar MRT Station)

Cost of Workshop: \$38 per person (for 1 large candle)

Limited seats available for workshop.

Register via email : [canossian.membership@gmail.com](mailto:canossian.membership@gmail.com)

**Closing date : 30 Aug 2019**



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