

“The Community that Bears Fruit”

Last year while on mission during Lent I was invited by the parish priest to sit in on an RCIA class in one of the rural parishes in the far north of Melbourne, Australia. Being rural the class had only 8 adults who wanted to know more of the Catholic faith.

It was there that I met John (not his real name), one of the 8, an Australian, who worked as an insurance agent for an insurance company about 100 kilometres from the parish. He had a friendly disposition about him and very approachable.

I was wondering whether he was investigating the Christian community. Does he want to be to be like these people? Or being a bachelor, I wondered if it was a love interest whom he had an eye for that drew him to the RCIA program? These thoughts ran through my mind.

Later I found out that John would travel about 100 kilometres where he lived near his work place every Sunday just to attend mass although he was not a Catholic and then he would stay after mass for a cup of coffee, some cake, biscuits and brownies for fellowship with the faithful.

Since I was working in the parish for two weeks, which was part of the mission, I visited some of the parishioners during the day.

There were only two masses on the weekend. One on Saturday evening and the other Sunday morning. It was a small congregation mostly country people who were very hospitable.

On one such visitation, an elderly woman who lived on her own, mentioned to me that John was suffering from an incurable illness, a kind of rare cancer and had not long to live. I was shocked as John was young and did not show any signs of any illness let alone a kind of inoperable cancer.

On the last Sunday I was there, before departing for another parish the next day, John made an appointment to see me after mass. He then told me about his illness and that he found such consolation visiting the parishioners in this small country town. It was through them that he began to know about Jesus and his unconditional love that heals. He wept the very first time he walked into this church, knowing that God loved him not because he is good, but because God is good.

Months later, I received a message from the parish priest than John died peacefully, after being baptised a Catholic. He was 38 years old.

Like the fig tree in today’s gospel this community did bear fruit and will not be cut down.

Reflection by Glenn de Cruz, CSsR

Novena notes

3rd Sunday of Lent
 Year C
 24th March 2019

Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 24 March	Ex 3:1-8,13-15; 1 Cor 10:1-6,10-12; Lk 13:1-9 The Lord is compassion and love.
Mon, 25 March The Annunciation Of The Lord	Is 7:10-14,8:10; Hebr 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38 Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.
Tue, 26 March	Dan 3:25,34-43; Mt 18:21-35 Remember your mercy, Lord.
Wed, 27 March	Deut 4:1,5-9; Mt 5:17-19 O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Thu, 28 March	Jer 7:23-28; Lk 11:14-23 O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts.'
Fri, 29 March	Hos 14:2-10; Mk 12:28-34 I am the Lord, your God; listen to my warning.
Sat, 30 March	Hos 5:15-6:6; Lk 18:9-14 What I want is love, not sacrifice.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)
 Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm
 Confession: Half an hour before Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)
 Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS
 Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon, 5.30pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAY
 Time: 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS
 Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION
 English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm
 Mandarin: 2.30pm

Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION
 Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)
 6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

Novena notes

25th March, Annunciation Of The Lord

The feast of the Annunciation, now recognized as a solemnity, was first celebrated around the fourth or fifth century. Its central focus is the Incarnation : God has become one of us, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity becomes human. The God-Man embraces all humanity, indeed all creation, to bring it to God in one great act of love. Because human beings have rejected God, Jesus comes to show us the way back to God.

Mary has an important role to play in God's plan. God destined her to be the mother of Jesus. Because Mary is God's instrument in the Incarnation, she has a role to play with Jesus in our redemption. It is a God-given role. It is God's grace from beginning to end.

Mary becomes the eminent figure only by God's grace. Mary is the virgin-mother carrying out the will of God. She received into her lowliness the infinite love of God. She shows how an ordinary human being can reflect God in the ordinary circumstances of life.



She exemplifies what the Church and every member of the Church is meant to become. She is the ultimate person of the creative and redemptive power of God.

RCIA English Programme

We will be starting our new RCIA Programme. It will begin on 2nd July 2019 to 19th May 2020. RCIA is for adults - 18 years and above, who are interested to know more about the Catholic faith. The application form can be obtained at the Church Office. The closing date for application is on 18th May 2019.

Lenten Novena

We are in the 6th Week of our Lenten Novena to prepare for Easter The Theme for this special Novena is: "The Three Pillars to Holiness" All are welcome and bring along your family and friends.

16 Feb : The Three Pillars to Holiness

23 Feb : Prayer : Our Talking to God

2 Mar : Prayer : Our Listening to God

9 Mar : Prayer : Our Living with God

16 Mar : Fasting : Our Physical Hungers and Needs

23 Mar : Fasting : Our Spiritual Hungers and Needs

30 Mar : Almsgiving : Our Works of Charity

6 Apr : Almsgiving : Our Works of Justice and Peace

13 Apr : Growing and Living in Holiness

RCIA Chinese Programme

The New Chinese RCIA programme (2019/2020) for Adults will begin on 29th June 2019.

Application forms can be obtained at the Church Office.

Chinese Lenten Rally 2019

ACAMS will be organizing a Lenten Rally in Novena Church. The Theme for this Lenten Rally is : "Communion In Church"

The rally consists of 5 nights & will start at 7.45pm till 9.45pm

13 Mar - Fr. Henry Siew
20 Mar - Fr. John Chen Binshan
27 Mar - Fr. Peter Zhang
3 Apr - Fr. Eugene Lee
10 Apr - Fr. Terence Wee

Stations Of The Cross

Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 6.00pm followed by Mass at 6.30pm.

