



Catholic Women's League Hong Kong Newsletter

June 2021

Volume 31 Issue 2



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Dates to Remember

11 June: Feast of the Sacred Heart

19 Aug: Fr Russell's b'day celebration

The **Mothers' Evening Prayer group** meets every Tuesday at 9 pm on zoom.

From Fr Russell's Desk...

The feast of Corpus Christi

The feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, is the same as Holy Thursday. But since in Holy Week we could not celebrate this feast with the outward observances, especially eucharistic processions that up to even recent times were a feature of the feast of Corpus Christi, a special day after the Easter season was appointed on which to focus our attention on this great sacrament. The opening prayer at Mass on the Feast of Corpus Christi refers to the Eucharist as a gift and memorial.



Jesus gave us the Eucharist to keep fresh in our minds the love for us with which he endured his passion and death. *Do this*, he told his disciples at the Last Supper, *do this in memory of me*. As if to say: *All I ask of you is ever to remember me as loving you*. In gift-giving our gift is just a symbol of ourself and of our desire to give ourselves.

Without that element of self giving, the giving of a gift is little more than a business transaction. And in the gift of the Eucharist Jesus has put himself into the gift, put himself whole and entire, body and blood, soul and divinity. And that is what we are thanking him for on this feast day. The Eucharist was prefigured in the Old Testament. The Israelites escaped from Egypt with great joy, but soon the harsh reality of journeying in the desert made itself felt. They complained they had neither food nor drink. When Moses, you remember, struck the rock at God's command, they had water to satisfy their needs. And for food God gave them manna. This they collected every morning and it was enough to sustain them on that day's journey.

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The feast of Corpus Christi

...continued from page 1

We too are on a pilgrim journey, a journey home to our Father's house, and we too need nourishment for each day's stage of our journey: and this is why Jesus gave us the Eucharist. The Eucharist is also God's presence among us. In the Old Testament, the holy of holies in the Temple symbolized his presence among his people. In the New Testament his body is the temple of his presence.

It is there we meet him and he meets us. It is there we have easy access to him. But has this access been made too easy? Have we got too used to it? Do we fail to appreciate because it has no scarcity value. People flock to Lourdes, to Fatima, to the scene of some purported appearance of the Blessed Virgin. But in the Eucharist it is not the mother of our Lord that is present, but the Lord himself. We are so used to the Eucharist. It has ceased to amaze us as it should without wonder, our faith in the real presence risks growing dim. Supposing Jesus was really present in the Eucharist in only one place in the world: imagine the number of pilgrims that would visit such a shrine. But when we can find him in our parish church just down the road, there seems less incentive to reverence him there.

It was Pope Pius X who changed that pattern. Did not the Israelites on their pilgrim way need manna every day? And isn't sharing in a common meal after making the offering an integral part of a sacrifice? But did this saintly Pope foresee the consequences of his initiative? That being over-familiar with this sacred mystery we would value it too little? At a sharing I attended two mothers lamented the fact that their children had forsaken the Catholic Church for an evangelical sect. On reflecting afterwards I asked myself: how could people leave the church that has a Eucharist for one that does not? Then I reflected again on the little reverence people today pay to Christ's real presence in the tabernacle. Does our conduct in church, noise and chattering seem as if we were in the marketplace, the church turned into a film set at weddings, our slovenly genuflections -- surely these betray a lack of any depth of faith in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist? Have we failed to pass on to the present generation the faith the Church has always treasured?

The Eucharist is also the Holy Communion, since one of its purposes is to build up a unity, a community, aiming those who receive it. Isn't eating around the same table our human way of growing closer to one another in mutual appreciation and love: a sign of unity that already exists in a family and a way of enlarging and deepening that unity among a group of friends?

Now when we eat ordinary food we assimilate what we eat: it becomes part of us. In the Eucharist however we are assimilated to what we eat, we become part of the food we take. Our hope is that through the Eucharist we become more Christlike, that, in the words of the prayer of the Mass, *we may come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity*. For the Eucharist is the pledge of future glory. *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, Jesus told us, has eternal life, not will have. Through the Eucharist we are being prepared here on earth to live the divine life and I will raise him up on the last day*. Note, *has eternal life, not will have*. Through the Eucharist we are being prepared here on earth to live the divine life of heaven. Heaven is pictured as a banquet that the Father prepares for his Son and to which he invites us all. Just as in the Old Testament manna prefigured the Eucharist, so the Eucharist prefigures the banquet of eternal life. Let us try to renew our faith in the Eucharist, resolve that our comportment in his Eucharistic presence may manifest and at the same time strengthen our belief in this great mystery, and above all let us give thanks to God for this incredible sign of his love for us.

(Fr Russell has been spiritual director of the Catholic Women's League since 1991.)

‘We asked and we received’: Raffle 2021

It feels as though we finished celebrating the joys of Easter just the other day and summer is already upon us. We are already halfway into 2021, the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The key activity in April and May has traditionally been our annual CWL Raffle. This year was no different. Compared to the robust beginnings of past years, the first two weeks’ performance this year was lacklustre. We sold only one box and had six more boxes to sell and only six weeks to do it. So we quickly put together an appeal letter with the help of our Fund Committee to include few sample cases that we helped last year. With that we started to reach out to our members, friends, acquaintances and organisations for their support. We saw ticket sales increase by 30 per cent in one week. That was the result of teamwork.

When we can’t do things the old way, we have to think of other ways to be more creative. Sharing with you below is what one member did:

- Asked for permission and decorated half of a bulletin board near the entrance to the church with our flyer/photos/appeal letter etc.
- Prepared stamped, self-addressed return envelopes each containing a return slip with checklist for a hassle-free way to making a donation. (See pic below)
- An announcement was made at the end of Mass; CWL’s appeal was in the weekly church announcement until we notified the parish office.



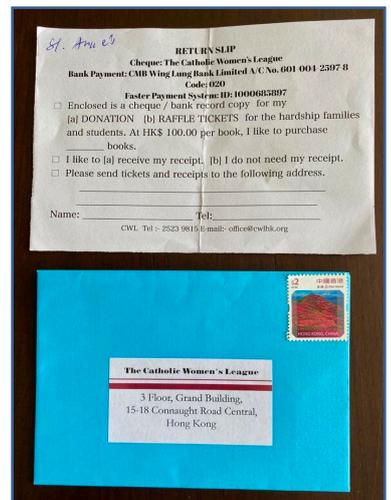
Fernanda, Irene and Linda at St Anne’s Church

Through her effort, we received a \$20,000 cheque plus ticket sales. Thank you, Fernanda, for going that extra mile.

Our “Queen of Sales” this year is again non other than our forever young and energetic Yvonne Tsui. She sold 1,000 books worth \$100,000, beating her own record of 805 books last year. Who could have refused the gentle, sweet lady when she asked them to buy some raffle tickets. All we need to do is “ASK”.

The total ticket sales and donations from the raffle was \$682,550, a 12 per cent increase from last year. We also received designated donations of \$146,500 to our Hardship Fund.

Jesus said: *Ask and you shall receive...* There were a lot of prayers offered during this difficult fundraiser period. By our faith and trust in God we have come through another difficult year. I thank you for all your prayers and participation in our grand raffle in helping CWL to continue its charity work. “It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.” --Mother Teresa.



Members at the cathedral after mass on June 3.

We thank the Lord that Fr. Russell could be with us at the Raffle Draw on June 3 at the Diocesan Centre. He has recovered well so far. May God continue to bless him with renewed strength and improved eyesight. We were honoured to have Fr. Tommy Murphy as our special guest to witness the lucky draw. He has been saying mass for us since last October and travelled with us on field trips to outer islands. He is truly a Godsend.

Our weekly mass is still at the Cathedral. However, starting in June, the last Thursday’s mass will be celebrated at St. Peter’s Church, 3/F Chi Wo Commercial Bldg., 20 Saigon St. in Jordan. This is to facilitate our members who live on the Kowloon side.

In August, we are looking to celebrate Fr. Russell’s birthday. Hopefully, Hong Kong will be in a better situation by then allowing us to have the party in a much better surrounding. Stay tuned for further information.

If you will be traveling this summer, I wish you a happy and safe journey. For those staying in town, I hope to see more of you at our weekly gatherings.

By Irene Chen

Raffle 2021: On the Day of the Draw



Fr Russell with Fr Francis Tse & Fr Tommy

Rolling the lottery machine for the first 5 prizes!



Lenten Retreat at Lamma

On a bright and sunny morning on 25 March, 16 CWL members along with some guests gathered at Yung Shue Wan Ferry Pier in Central to travel to Lamma Island. They were joined by Fr Tommy Murphy for a day of prayerful retreat.

Once we got to Lamma after a 30-minute ferry ride we did a leisurely 20-minute trek to Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel, perched atop a serene hill amid lush greenery and flowering plants. The Mass was celebrated by Fr Tommy Murphy, which was followed by a “Talk” and our Holy Hour.

Participants were further blessed on this beautiful day as it was the Feast of the Annunciation. We recited the Rosary together and then had a few minutes for silent adoration of the Holy Eucharist, at which time Fr Tommy made himself available to hear confessions.

On the chapel hill is a beautiful Way of the Cross. Many of us used the prayer time to form small groups to say the Way of the Cross, meandering through the paths just below the chapel where the Stations were set up. Some others continued to spend time in meditation under the canopy of the trees.

This chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, is also the Portiuncula Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament (with 24 hour Adoration of the Holy Eucharist).

For lunch, we descended slowly to Lamma main street for a most pleasant and sumptuous meal in a local seafood restaurant. We had a wonderful and relaxing time plus the rare opportunity (these days) to enjoy the company of good friends. Many said that the day was perfectly spent with some time for God and time also for relaxation in the tranquil surroundings of Lamma Island. We thank Fr Tommy for the wonderful suggestion to go to Lamma and to Maria Chu for the smooth arrangements. Maria was amazing as she ran up-and-down many times to bring our ladies from the ferry pier to the chapel and then again from the chapel to the restaurant. We think she must have covered half a marathon.

This was our second Lenten outing of prayer and fellowship this year and members felt we should have more when the weather gets cooler and ambient. (See pictures on Page 6) **By Paulette Santos and Daphne da Rosa**



The Portiuncula Monastery

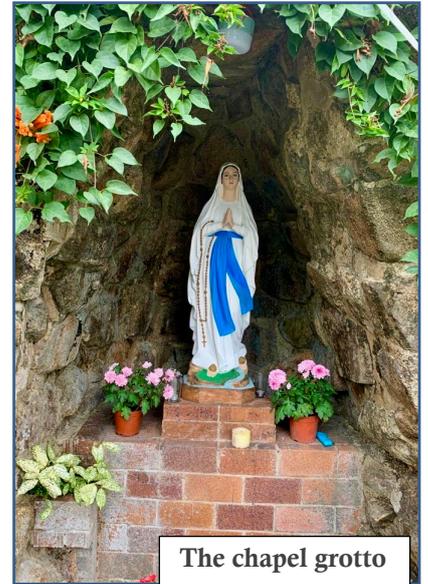
Strolling through the main street in Tai Yuen village in Lamma, one comes across a sign that says “Portiuncula Monastery”. The sign takes you into a short winding road that goes up a hill. Nestled there is the Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel. The precincts also have a monastery that is home to the Poor Clare Nuns. The Portiuncula monastery was blessed by Bishop Joseph Zen on December 10, 2000. The Poor Clare Nuns belong to the Franciscan family founded by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi during the middle ages.

Amid luscious greenery and local wildlife, the nuns spend most of their time in prayer, penance and manual work in the garden. They lead a cloistered contemplative life.

They are a community of praying nuns, wholly devoted to praying the Liturgy of the hours and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The church looks up to them as the “heart of the Mystical Body of Christ”. Through their life of prayer, they sustain the spiritual life of many.

They offer solace and quiet refuge to those who long to find rest in God. They have perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, daily masses and Sunday English mass at 9:00 am.

Our day out at Lamma Island



The chapel grotto



Way of the Cross



Lunch at a seafood restaurant on main street—the many joys of Lamma!



CWL Diary...



8 April: April birthday girls Yvonne Tsui & Daphne da Rosa cut a birthday cake.



8 April: Committee members pose with the birthday girls after the meeting.



20 May: Thursday mass and Holy Hour at St Peter's Church, Jordan. We will continue to have our Thursday fellowship at this venue on the last Thursday of every month.



3 June: Members pose with Fr Russell at the Caritas restaurant. Father had lunch with them after joining the annual CWL raffle draw.