



CANOSSIAN COLLEGES ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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"The fruits of our acts of charity towards our neighbour will be proportionate to the spirit of prayer accompanying our words and actions."

Address By Sister Cecilia Cham, Spiritual Director

Very often, people would come to me and said: "Sister, can you teach me how to pray?"

Prayer is our second language! It is the language that connects God with His beloved children. Many people make the quick assumption that, because they want to pray, they can pray and need no help. That is not true. We have to face the plain fact that the vast majority of the people, even those who have a "religious upbringing~" have never progressed in prayer beyond the simple prayers they learned at "mother's knee" or in school. They have never learnt how to pray.

I think most people will agree that prayer comes naturally enough in moments of pain, or need, or desperation. Most of us have found ourselves saying: "Oh, God, help me through this" or, "O God, watch over me, and keep me safe." And at a time of enormous relief, when some disaster threatened and passed, we said quite promptly "Thanks be to God" with real feelings and relief.

In times of crisis we have thought of God and, almost in spite of ourselves, have really spoken to Him and found it perfectly natural to do so. It is strange that it takes a crisis for many of us to do this extremely natural thing. Whether we realize it or not, God is there all the time and nothing could be more natural and practical, than to try to keep in touch with Him.

That is what prayer really is — keeping in touch with God; not just going to him in a crisis, when we are desperate and don't know where else to turn for help.

Our lives are too full, too busy, too cluttered up with all kinds of activities, not only our work, but our play, too, so that we have simply crowded God out

If God is ever going to become real, we need to create periods of quietness inside ourselves. You might be saying your prayers and going to Church, but it won't mean that much to you. All real prayer, all real contact with God, starts in an atmosphere of peace and quiet. It's the inner silence that gives God a chance to be God. You can only meet God and find Him, in an atmosphere of peace and quiet. I believe that this is the very simple reason why many of us have lost our bold on God and religion. It is not because we don't believe in Him any longer, but because we are too busy to find time for him. He does not fit into our schedule. He is not part of our agenda. He gets lost in the rough tumble of our daily lives. He gets crowded out

You will never be able to feel God touching your life, unless you deliberately plan times to be quiet with Him. You might think: how on earth, given my schedule, can I get peace and quiet, with my job, family, social commitments and many other matters to attend to? It is fair to say that it is not easy to find moments of peace and quiet, without fear of interruption but don't say it is impossible, until you have really tried.

Let us imagine that you have managed to find a suitable place for prayer and have ten minutes or so. Say to yourself "This is God's time." Begin by getting yourself as quiet and as relaxed as you can. There is no need to kneel if you find that uncomfortable and distracting. You can sit in your favorite chair, or stand up if you like, or even walk about. You can do it sitting in the car waiting for the traffic lights to change. waiting for the bus, in the waiting room, on the bike, in the kitchen cleaning up, brushing your teeth. God does not stand on ceremony. He is always available. The important thing is to get the body relaxed and still. It is not easy to get rid of stress and tension. Half of the time, our bodies are so tense and uptight, especially in these nerve-racking days that they keep our minds tense, too. If the process of quieting down takes us three or four minutes, it is time well spent We can only meet God in an atmosphere of peace and quiet

When you are quite relaxed, both body and soul, introduce into your mind one simple thought and hold it there, "God is here." Just that one thought. There is no need to say anything, there is no need to try to pray. Just dwell on that one thought, "God is here, I am in God's presence. God is looking at me and loving me."

When the time spent in prayer is up, go back to your work, or whatever occupation you are about, and see if there isn't a difference. Christian prayer is built on the simple idea that by looking in your mind's eye at Jesus, as he is portrayed in the Gospel stories, and remembering that he is alive and real, in fact, you are looking at God Himself. I know there are other ways of knowing God through creation, art, music, in the poor and needy, and so on, but for the moment, this is the one we are thinking about. The more we look at Him and see Him looking at us, the more we realize that He is more than a historical figure in a story book, a picture on the wall, or a chain around our necks. That He is, in fact, with us always, a living person, a loving God, who never lets us out of His sight for a moment to arrive at this level of awareness, takes practice, practice and more practice.

As you look at Christ like that, you will find yourself compelled to take a careful look at yourself, your home, your work, your hobby, the company you keep, the language you speak, everything. You will begin to see yourself as God sees you, as his beloved, and that is very healthy and humbling. The kind of prayer we are talking about helps us acquire a certain facility for being *in* touch with God, so that every moment is rooted in. an almost unconscious awareness of Him and thus our whole life is colored and glorified in His presence. May I wish everyone of you, your family, your friends and any acquaintances which you might encounter briefly in your daily life, find peace and love always.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Theresa Tsang, SHCC

Dear Fellow Alumnae,
CCAA celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2007. The association had come a long way from its founding in 1987 to now and it had not been easy for members who came all the way from Hong Kong and Macau to meet and gather here in Vancouver, Canada.

Apart from preparing a fun-filled Christmas Dinner in December 2006 and an inspiring Retreat delivered by Fr. Curtin at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in March, all efforts of the board members had been directed in preparing the 20th Anniversary celebration events after the AGM in May. On September 29, 2007 we had a celebration Mass at The Canadian Martyrs Church in Richmond, liturgy and choir were presented by our members, who spent many hours practicing the verses and songs. The Mass was followed by a reception at the church hall with delicious food enough to serve 300 people. A Food and Craft sale was also organized. We sold cake coupons and little crystal ornaments made by our members.

On the next day, September 30, 2007 over 200 members, their friends and families joined us in our celebration dinner at a Chinese restaurant in Richmond. Among them, we have two honor guests; Sister Ann Bosio, Provincial Superior of the Canossian Sisters in North America and Sister Lucy Yau from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Donation funds of US\$5,000 raised through the various events was presented to Sister Ann to support the charitable good works of the Canossian Sisters. Flowers were also presented to our spiritual director, Sister Cecilia Cham to thank her for her leadership throughout these twenty years and to all past board directors for their contributions to the association.

To prepare for the 20th Anniversary events many past board directors and members and their friends had come forward and dedicated many hours to work with the current board directors and I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you all. Special thanks are given to Pauline Mak who was in charge of the 20th Anniversary Committee; Teresa Au and her Editorial Team for doing the 20th Anniversary booklet; her Craft Team for doing the crystal ornaments; Janny Li and her Sponsorship Team for fund raising; Resela Wong-Sing and her team for liturgy and choir singing during mass; Fr. Chu for conducting the celebration mass and letting us use the church hall; members from the Lay Canossian and the Legion of Mary from Canadian Martyrs Church for preparing food for the reception; Betty Leung and Hilda Lee for organizing the celebration dinner; Penny Choi and Linda Fung for being MCs of our dinner; Risa Liu for performing at the dinner; Amy Wong, Ginna Ng and Gigi Lau for designing and sending out notices to members; Vicky Wong and Fanny Chu for preparing all prizes; Magdalen Chiu for sponsoring events and Agnes Chiu for finding sponsors.. Last but not least, to those members that came to join and participate in our functions.

Through the love of your schools many members had given CCAA your dedication and assistance and I hope you all will continue to support us. Finally, on behalf of all Board of Directors, I wish you all a happy & healthy 2008!

Fun in Christmas Dinner, 2006

Amy Wong, SMCC

For me, Christmas Dinner is all about chatting and eating. But in the last Christmas Dinner, I didn't have much time to eat and chat with others because I was the MC of the dinner.

Last year was my 2nd year attending the CCAA Annual Christmas Dinner. I remembered that my previous one was in 2004, and that was also my first time to join a CCAA event. I was so happy to meet many school friends, and I really enjoyed the night. So I was so glad and excited that I could be the MC in the Christmas Dinner.

On Dec 2, 2006, we, all the board members, arrived worked together to set up the reception and the prize table. There were a lot of prizes, and some of them were really big prizes!

There were lots of events on that night. We started by playing the table prizes game. Then we sang Christmas songs together. The highlight of the dinner was the lucky draws. We had both raffle tickets and door prizes draw. We all shouted out the table numbers and the raffle numbers; the atmosphere was very warm. I was very lucky that my name got pick up by Fr. Chu, and I won a toaster to bring home.

I want to give a million of thanks to my MC partner Gigi Lau. This was my first time being a MC in the CCAA Annual Christmas Dinner. She is very experienced and helped me a lot.

It was a wonderful night. Many thanks to our board members and many others who helped to organize and make last year's Christmas Dinner a success.





As a result of CCAA 20th Anniversary celebration, we were able to raise close to C\$8,000.00 for charity. US\$5000.00 was presented to Sr. Anne Bosio, Provincial Superior of Canossian Mission in North America during our 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. A letter was received from Sr. Anne telling us that they had invested the funds in education in Chihuahua, Mexico and said "due to your support and help, we were able to assist the sisters in remodeling and furnishing classrooms and a library for the children of Chihuahua. Once again, thank you for your generosity."



REMEMBERING

Magdalene Chan Lam, graduate of SHCC, teacher of Canossian College, founding member and Chartered President of CCAA passed away on January 16, 2008.



Upcoming Events

Retreat 2008

Title: STRENGTH AND SALVATION COME THROUGH HIS CROSS
 Date: Saturday, March 8, 2008
 Time: 9:00 am (Mass) to 3:00 pm
 Place: St Peter & Paul Parish, 1430 West 38th Avenue, Vancouver
 Admission: By donation (bring your own lunch, refreshments provided)
 For detail information and registration, please contact **Theresa Tsang @ 604 728 8830**



200th Canossian Mission Celebration

Date: September 13, 2008 (Saturday)

Pilgrimage to Eucharistic Congress



**49th INTERNATIONAL
 EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS
 QUEBEC CITY, CANADA
 June 15 to 22, 2008**
*The Eucharist, gift of God
 for the life of the world.*

It is the first time that Canada hosts the International Eucharistic Congress. Canadian Martyrs Catholic Church (CMCC) has organized a pilgrimage for it plus an extension to visit churches and shrine on the east coast. It is a journey to attend the presentations and liturgy of the Congress. Departures date is June 19, 2008. Detail itinerary available at CMCC Information desk. Register for the Congress by going to website <http://cei2008.ca>

Date	Places	Additional highlights
June 19-27, 2008	Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto	Canadian Martyrs, Shrine at Midland, ON
June 19-30, 2008	With extension to New York	Our Lady of Martyrs, Shrine at Auriesville, NY



In Loving Memory of Sister Lily Anne Medina

By Belinda Leong Cheng (SHCC, Macau)



The death of Sister Lily Anne Medina was a great loss to her family, her Canossian sisters, and her past students. With heavy hearts, we gathered together on November 10, 2007 for a mass specially offered for her at Canadian Martyrs Church in Richmond, BC. More than thirty of her past students including their family members attended the mass. Most of them were the past students from Sacred Heart College of Macau. We had the honor of inviting her sister, Freda, to attend the mass as well.

After the service, some group photos were taken. Sister Cecilia Cham, the spiritual director of the Canossian Alumnae Association in Vancouver, gave more detailed information of Sister Lily Anne's final days and her funeral in Albuquerque. Together we shared the lovely memories we had with Sister Lily Anne. Her talents and devotion to her service in the Canossian Congregation for over 60 years were deeply admired and appreciated. All of us agreed that she had touched each of our hearts in her own special ways. We are proud to be her students. Let us pray for Sister Lily Anne that her soul may rest in God's peace. We are sure that she will extend her loving care for us in Heaven.

20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MASS AND RECEPTION

By Resela Wong-Sing (SMCC)

In 2007 CCAA reached its 20th Anniversary milestone. It is truly amazing that we, Canossian alumnae germinated from the brainchild of a few like-minded alumni grew to three hundred strong members! It is also unique that this association encompasses all the Canossian schools and colleges under the tutelage of Sr. Cecilia Cham, our Spiritual Director. As Canossian graduates we surely make our founder St. Magdalene proud.

We began our celebration on September 29th with morning Mass celebrated by Fr. Paul Chu at Canadian Martyrs Church. It was well attended. Sr. Anne Bosio, North American Provincial Superior and Sr. Lucy Yau, formerly of Vancouver joined us from Albuquerque, U.S.A. It was the Feast of the Archangels. St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael took us under their wings. The sun was shining, the liturgy was empowering and the chorus was angelic.

Kudos to Lay Canossians and Ladies of the Legion of Mary for organizing the reception. The tables were exquisitely arranged and the food was scrumptious. Sr. Anne gave a thank you speech and words of encouragement. Fr. Chu led the Grace before we all enjoyed ourselves in fellowship. We also took this opportunity to fundraise by auctioning homemade cakes and craft items made by members. We took a group photo to commemorate this event as well.

