



# Canossian Colleges Alumnae Association Newsletter

6071 Christina Road Richmond, B.C. V7C 2P7  
Website: [www.canossianalumnae.org](http://www.canossianalumnae.org)

Volume 13, Issue 1  
Fall 2009

*"We are happy to serve God everywhere, just as He wants us to"*

*St. Magdalene of Canossa*

## Spiritual Director's Address

**Sister Cecilia Cham, fdCC**

Dear Alumnae,

In a world where the nightly news brings us very close to war, crime and violence, there is renewed interest in the search for inner peace and spirituality.

St. Paul describes our community as a mystical body, with Jesus informing all the members through baptism in which he shares His very life, bonding each of us to one another as the soul informs every part of the human body. It is in this we find our vocation, filling a need and playing a part in the growth and health of the community.

Living out that role is what God has called us to accomplish in our life. We still do not know in detail, however, what is expected of us, but we now at least know that we are to accomplish something special, something that no one else can do but ourselves. We have been fitted for that work by special gifts and in special ways, and our holiness is tied up with that unique calling. We will grow in our own personal holiness within the framework of that calling.

As we fulfill our role and cooperate with God's grace, we gradually become more like Jesus, channelling His light and healing presence into the community. As His life grows within us through our Eucharist and our prayers, we learn to think His thoughts and feel His feelings and become more and more like Him. We are being fashioned by the gentle hand of God into that unique kind of saint that God has intended us to become. There may never be another saint like us, but that is what is so beautiful about God. Each of His creatures is special.

It is this very imperfect and flawed clay of our humanness that forms the substance of our transformation. It is our failings and weaknesses, as humiliating as they are to us, that God uses to accomplish His wonders within us, and uses as the engine that drives us to become the instruments of His miracles of grace to others.

We become holy working with what we have been given, and within the limitations built into our personalities. And that is all right with God. He knows what we have to work with. He made us. It doesn't bother Him that we have limitations, sometimes severe limitations, as long as we are struggling to be what we are able to be, and are sensitive to others' needs and pain. We just have to learn to have the humility to realize we are seriously flawed and patiently, prayerfully, wait for God's grace to strengthen us. Once we realize our frailty and open our lives to God, it does not take long before God starts to work within us, and to use us to reach out to others.

If Jesus wants all of us to follow Him in holiness, and He calls us to be perfect as His heavenly Father, how does He expect us to do this since He made us all so flawed? It did not make sense. God was too intelligent and too efficient for that. God wanted to share His image with us by giving us His only son, Jesus, who had showed us the gentle, compassionate side of His Personality. Jesus was not driven by personal need to accomplish great feats, or to achieve political status or a reputation for Himself. He was just Himself, and people knew He had no hidden agenda, and would in no way use them for selfish motives. They entrusted themselves to Him.

As our relationship with God grows, unhealthy needs that used to weigh so heavily upon us fade and our inclinations to fulfill those needs all but disappear. We see our sins and imperfections diminish, and gradually fade away. Slowly, we grow, each day becoming more like Jesus in the way we think and feel and in the respect we show to others. It is our ability to feel people's pain and carry their pain in our own hearts that bonds us most closely to Jesus, as our souls echoed with His understanding and compassion.

St. Paul had expressed it so beautifully: "I live, but now, not I, for Christ lives in me". It is not an essential part of the process of living more and more in God, that as our love for Him deepens, the more keenly we sense the inner "feelings" of God. This is the unique kind of spirituality that Jesus promised to those who accept Him as He shares with us the joy and beauty of his own inner life.



May I wish you and your family a very joyous Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.



## Message from the President

Vicky Wong SMCC

Dear Fellow Alumnae,

The 2009 - 2010 Annual General Meeting was held on 7 June 2009, at the Richmond Kirin Seafood Restaurant. Around 100 members and guests attended the gathering. This year, we do not have any nominations for new board members. All 2008 - 2009 board members have retained their duties for year 2009 - 2010, except our Secretary, Victoria Chu and Director of Membership, Vicky Chan. Victoria is furthering her education and Vicky is currently in Hong Kong, pursuing her new career. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to both Victoria and Vicky, for their service to CCAA in the past year and wishing them every success in their future endeavours.

Commencing 2009, the Board has set a new regulation on the expiry date for

non-lifetime membership - to expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. In other words, regardless of which date of the year a new member joins CCAA, the membership will still expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> that same year. Good news on the side, that our membership fee will remain the same - \$10 per annum or \$100 for lifetime. Furthermore, to express our appreciation for those alumnae who have committed to become lifetime members, we have prepared an embossed "lifetime member" pen as a gift.

On August 15, 2009, CCAA hosted a one day summer picnic to the Fraser Valley. Places visited included the Minter Gardens, Westminster Abbey and Cultus Lake. The Group enjoyed a relaxing and wonderful get-away trip. It is our goal to host at least one outing each year. Members' suggestions on what they wish to do and where to visit are always welcome.

The Board has also set a tentative schedule for some of the 2010 events. The 2010 CCAA retreat will take place in early March, to be conducted in Cantonese, by Father Anthony Ho. The Board is looking into the possibility of having the 2010 AGM held in early May, to coincide with Mother General's visit to Vancouver. Additionally, in mid May 2010, a group of 80 alumnae members, family and friends will be starting a 14-day Holy Land Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan and Egypt. The response for the Pilgrimage has been overwhelming.

Last but not least, on behalf of the CCAA Board, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to your continuous support. May we wish you a very splendid Christmas and a joyful New Year!

## 2009 Summer Picnic

Janet Mak SMCC

The Summer Picnic took place on August 15, 2009. The Group of 31 participants, including alumnae members, family & friends, led by Sister Cecilia Cham, started the day with a visit to the Westminster Abbey in Mission.

Situated on a 180-metre elevation above the Fraser River, a 200-acre site that includes the abbey grounds, farm & seminary campus, this beautiful monastery is a famous landmark attracting thousands of visitors annually. The surrounding scenery is gorgeous, with rolling hills, the Coast Mountains & the Fraser River as the backdrop. Looking from the Viewpoint of the Monastery, the view of the Fraser Valley is panoramic. We enjoyed the scenery, though the skies were a bit cloudy. Upon the Abbey church's distinctive ring of the 10 bells, the Group attended the mid-morning mass.

After mass, we had a delicious Chinese lunch in Chilliwack. The picnic continued after lunch, touring the Minter Gardens in Rosedale. The 32-acre show



garden features a floral tapestry of colour, scent & design. We leisurely strolled through the 11 "themed" gardens. Thanks to modern technology of the digital camera - a lot of photos taken but no worries for

films.

We had a brief stop later on at the Cultus Lake, the perfect place for a family getaway. We spent a relaxing half hour by the Lake before heading back to Vancouver, with fresh corn & fruits bought from a Chilliwack farm.

We look forward to the next summer picnic, with more members participating.





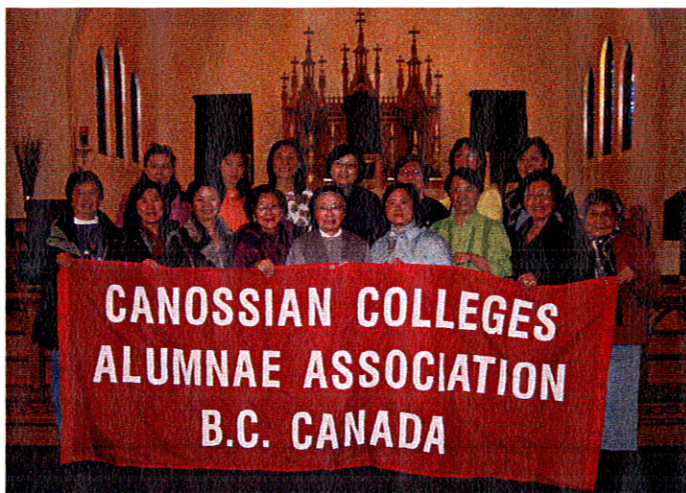
## 2009 CCAA Retreat

Our annual retreat fell on April 4. It was held at St. Peter and Paul's Church and was led by Fr. John Hogan. This year our retreat was slightly different from the ones we used to. Due to the heavy schedule of Fr. John Hogan, instead of having a whole day retreat with our own schoolmates, we joined the parishioners of St. Peter and Paul for a half day retreat.

At the beginning we didn't have much feedback from our girls; we were a bit worried about the low participation. On the day of our retreat, I was happy to see around 40 people show up for the retreat and I had no difficulty in recognizing those familiar faces from the other parishioners. Among those familiar faces, there is one I am looking forward to meeting once a year. This is a young mother with two infants. Whenever I inform her about our dinner parties, she will not be able to make it. However, our annual retreat is the only function that she will try her best to attend. She has told me that going to our retreat is like taking a very important dose for her soul. We are also glad to see our teacher, Miss Liu, who made an effort to come from the senior home.

Humility was the theme of Fr. Hogan's talk for the retreat. All of us know that Jesus didn't choose to be born from a noble family in a grand palace. He was born in a stable. He chose to come on earth in the most humble way. He taught the

## Belinda Leong Cheng SHCC Macau



disciples that the Son of Man came to serve and not to be served. Thus we should follow the examples of Jesus, to serve and to love our neighbours.

Our retreat ended with a little of "our" own time. As requested by Sr. Cecelia Cham, we stayed behind to make the Way of Our Cross. We were happy to have our group photo taken as well.

## 40th Reunion in Macau

## May Lei SHCC Macau

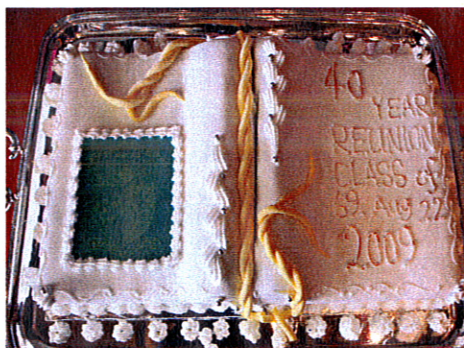
I am so glad I took part in our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion, Class of 69, Sacred Heart Canossian College, Macau.

A 40<sup>th</sup> reunion? I could not but repeat the words to myself again when the idea was first brought up. No 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> reunions and out of the blue, a 40<sup>th</sup> reunion! But then, after the initial doubts, I found myself considering, well, 40 years might be a perfect time for reunion.

A 10<sup>th</sup> reunion, we might still be too wrapped up in our careers to enjoy the occasion. A 20<sup>th</sup> reunion, and we might be comparing with one another, envying for who was on the top of the bunch. A 30<sup>th</sup> reunion, well, we still might be boasting of our children and husbands. A 40<sup>th</sup> reunion, voila, we were now at the age when we could open up, relax and treasure the

meeting of old friends again! No comparisons, no jealousies nor envies.

Our reunion kicked off with a Mass for those of us who had departed and to thank the Lord for the realization of our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion. Not all of us were



Catholics but we all felt the same peace and joy during the Mass. This was the bonding we needed to a proper commencement of our unique day.

The highlight of the day was our lunch.

We invited as many of our former teachers as we could and the present principal and vice principal of Sacred Heart as well. Sr Maria Hsu, our Form 6 class teacher, flew in from San Francisco for the occasion. She led the thanksgiving grace before the lunch. Sr Dorothy, the principal, cut the celebration cake for us and Sr Evelyn Ip, the vice principal, gave the closing speech and thanks. We talked and laughed. What a hilarious time we had, watching the slide show of our old photos, as if time had not passed us by! The atmosphere was warm and fuzzy; all good friends, still together and having good times. No back stabbing, no pretences. Pure friendship and care. It was a memorable day that would surely be sincerely cherished by all attending.



## 2009 CCAA AGM

Vicky Chan SFCC

On June 7, 2009, our alumnae joined together at Kirin Seafood Restaurant in Richmond for our Annual General Meeting. Our Spiritual Director, Sr. Cecilia Cham, led us through an opening prayer and officially started the evening's festivities. Old friends and new acquaintances mingled and enjoyed a delicious dinner and a fun-filled evening.

Our alumnae all put their creative thinking hat on this year in a quest to identify a mysteriously shaped object – in the form of a wine bottle. One observant and thoughtful guest identified it correctly as an umbrella and took home the prize.

Throughout dinner, Janny Li from Charming Holidays, also an alumnae member, offered much details about the upcoming CCAA pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We all listened with rapt attention as excitement and anticipation for this upcoming voyage grew with the alluring picture Janny painted with her words.

Of course our AGM wouldn't be completed without a word from our president, Vicky Wong, who reported on behalf of the Board of Directors all that had taken place in the year prior. With the blessings of the alumnae, most directors on the board promised to continue their efforts in promoting and building CCAA for another year.

The evening ended with our trade-mark lucky draw, with prizes ranging from spa and beauty packages, hand-made crafts and t-shirts, gift certificates for abalone and a basket of dried seafood. Many of our guests went home happily with their prizes. The funds raised from the draw would be put towards building a better and stronger alumnae network as well as work to assist those in need in our community.

The evening ended with a heartfelt rendition of "Oh Verona", commemorating the great deeds of our Foundress, St. Magdalene of Canossa as our alumnae association moved towards another year with much blessings from the Lord.

## Meet our Board of Directors



2009-2010 Board of Directors	
Spiritual Director	Sr. Cecilia Cham
President	Vicky Wong
Vice President	Theresa Tsang
Secretary	Janet Mak
Treasurer	Helen Wong
Social Convenor	Belinda Cheng

## Special Announcements

FEBRUARY 2010

PAST BOARD LUNCHEON

MARCH 2010

RETREAT WITH FATHER ANTHONY HO  
(CONDUCTED IN CANOTONESE)

MAY 2010

AGM DINNER

MAY 2010

PILGRIM TOUR

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT  
JANNY LI AT

604-233-0081

AUGUST 2010

SUMMER PICNIC

DECEMBER 2010

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER