

Canossian Colleges Alumnae Association Newsletter

6071 Christina Road Richmond, B.C. V7C 2P7
Website: www.canossianalumnae.org

Volume 16, Issue 1
December 2012

"Take heart, let us hope incessantly, let us continue to love the Lord, loving Him with a willingness that He alone can see."

St. Magdalene of Canossa

Spiritual Director's Address

Sr. Cecilia Cham, FdCC

Dear Alumnae:

[This is a text taken from Pope Benedict XVI's general audience at the Vatican May 23, 2012]

In our reflection on prayer in the letters of St. Paul, we now consider two passages in which the Apostle speaks of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to call upon God as "Abba," our Father.

The word "Abba" was used by Jesus to express His loving relationship with the Father; our own use of this word is the fruit of the presence of the Spirit of Christ within us. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, we have become sons and daughters of God, sharing by adoption in the eternal sonship of Jesus.

Paul teaches us that Christian prayer is not simply our own work, but primarily that of the Spirit, who cries out in us and with us to the Father. In our prayer, we enter into the love of the indwelling Trinity as living members of Christ's Body, the Church. Our individual prayer is always part of the great symphony of the Church's prayer.

Let us open our hearts even more fully to the working of the Spirit within us, so that our prayer may lead us to greater trust in the Father and conformity to Jesus, His Son.

LORD, HELP ME BE KIND

*Lord, help me be ? for everyone ? the one who waits for the other without becoming impatient,
Who listens without becoming tired,
Who accepts with thanks and gives with love,
Who is always available when he is needed, the one to whom you can go when you are in need,
Who radiates peace from within, and
Who belongs totally to You and is therefore kind to others.*

As the year is drawing to a close, I wish you and your family good health, safe driving and may all your dreams come true.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Message from the President

Carmen Leung SMCC Macau

Dear Alumnae:

Thank you for joining us to celebrate our 25th Anniversary. This year, we will combine our annual Christmas gathering together with the anniversary celebration.

When we put together the annual Christmas Newsletter, we realize time has gone by so quick that we cannot hold it. Last year, we had the Chihuahua fundraising event. Now we are busy with another big event - the 25th Anniversary celebration. On December 8, 2012, we will have Mass and a dinner celebration. To commemorate this Silver Jubilee, we will produce an anniversary brochure. With the support and cooperation of our Board members, advisors and volunteers, we are able to make this happen.

As usual, we had events almost every month in the first part of year: the Past Board Lunch in February, Retreat in March, Feast Day of St Magdalene of Canossa in May, AGM dinner in June, and a Summer Getaway in July. After the summer holiday, we started to organize this Silver Jubilee celebration.

We hope that next year, we can have more members on our team to organize some more fun-filled activities. Any ideas and suggestions from you would be much appreciated. Through the grace of God, we strive to serve our Canossian community even better.

Wish you all a Blessed and Merry Christmas, as well as a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

Meet our Board of Directors

2011-2013 Board of Directors

Spiritual Director	Sr. Cecilia Cham
Advisor	Janet Mak
Advisor	Vicky Wong
Advisor	Helen Wong
President	Carmen Tam-Leung
Secretary	Beatrice Yeung
Treasurer	Esther Ng
Membership	Mary Chan

Special Announcements

February 2013	Past Board Luncheon
March 2013	Retreat
May 2013	Feast Day
May 2013	AGM
July 2013	Summer Picnic
December 2013	Christmas Party



Luncheon for Past Board Members

Doreen Wong

SHCC

This year's Past Board Members' Luncheon was held on Saturday, February 18th at Canadian Martyrs' Church. Whoever instigated this function should be commended for her foresight because it provided an opportunity for previous CCAA executives to meet, get acquainted, exchange ideas and share experiences with current Board members, as well as reminisce about old times among themselves. Although the turnout has somewhat to be desired, it was very worthwhile.

The food was excellent and plentiful, especially the vegetables cooked by none other than Sr. Cecilia Cham herself. She thought that vegetables catered by eateries are usually too greasy (hence unhealthy) and so decided to cook them herself. How very thoughtful!

At the luncheon, Sr. Cham urged us to be more proactive in organizing and participating in the association's activities because if we were not, there is the danger that CCAA may not be able to continue. At the moment, it seems that she is the driving force behind the Association as opposed to being simply the spiritual director/advisor. She feels that more input and involvement from members is necessary for the well-being of the Association. So, if any of you out there feel that you can contribute to the Association in such a way, please do not hesitate to contact Sr. Cham or any member of the current Board of Directors.



Retreat

Fannie Mao Guterres

SMCC

On March 3, 2012, a retreat especially held for past students of Canossian Colleges in Hong Kong and Macau took place at the Canadian Martyrs Catholic Church in Richmond, BC. For those who do not know Vancouver, Richmond is a city populated mostly by Chinese, where the Vancouver International airport is. The Canossian sisters reside in Richmond serving this community and the parish where mass in Chinese language is held.

It was a rainy day - pouring and cold. Board Members of CCAA arrived early in the morning with breakfast. Coffee, tea, bottled water, fruits and buns were ready promptly as Sr. Cecilia Cham and past students from all schools and years arrived. There was a joyous atmosphere amongst the women - chatters and laughter, a happy reunion. I, after many years living in Asia, was happy to meet classmates and old friends in the same room. About 40 attendants gathered together sharing experience of our schools. Many, like I, were excited about meeting long lost friends and classmates. The comradeship from a same upbringing was evidenced, with pure joy.



We were honoured to have Father Elton Fernandes to host this retreat. After mass, we gathered at the hall and started a day of spiritual process to learn, to explore, and hopefully to understand. Fr. Elton Fernandes is known for his lectures. As well as an excellent speech with interesting stories from bible and real life, his mild voice and sincere manner made listening pleasant. The theme was about Joy and Sorrow in life. We learnt how "hope" may change life for people suffering, to transform our sorrow to joy. We learnt that we all sometimes suffer, which we cannot avoid but we should not seek.

Group discussions were fruitful. We shared our stories and views. We talked about the blessings we received. We were led to think about the significance of blessing during silence. Sister Cecilia Cham, a past St. Mary's student, told how she was raised by a Buddhist family, and eventually answered the call from St. Magdalene, founder of Canossa Convent, at the school chapel. It was most interesting and enlightening to share her personal experience.

After lunch break, Father Fernandes began with the story of Bakhita, (Google: Spw Salve 2007) and other examples of real event. We had some small group discussions to share our thoughts. These exercises allow us to open up some of the queries we do not give time and effort to think during daily lives. Father further gave us insight on the meaning of "Lent", and the ritual of the prayers, fasting and almsgiving - giving to those in need especially at this time.

We ended the day by returning to the church. When we said the rosary, it was like school days. All the girls, no rehearsal, same words, same action, sincerely, we prayed together for our gratitude, to ask for guidance, to forgive and to heal.

Although the retreat was organized not solely for Catholics, most or all of the participants were indeed Catholics. With the busyness of daily life, it is not always easy to find time to stop and reflect. Retreat is a time to pause ...and glimpse at our lives. Sister Cecilia Cham and Board members of CCAA have organized this event for past students. On this chilly, rainy and gloomy day, we walked away with blessings of lights - light of peace and hope. We shall be blessed with strength, wisdom, courage and perseverance.

Over the past 25 years since CCAA, a registered non-profit organization in BC Canada, was established, the elected Board members organized numerous functions, not only to raise funds for charitable causes, but also to connect past students of our schools. We need to call on old girls from all the Canossian schools, encouraging everyone to join, and to participate in the fun events of all seasons. Let the Canossian spirit continue. God bless.

St. Magdalene of Canossa Feast Day

Ivy Lee

SHCC

A celebration well worth the moment

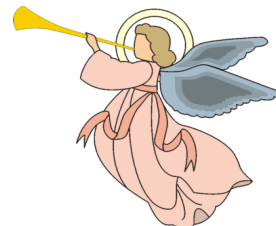
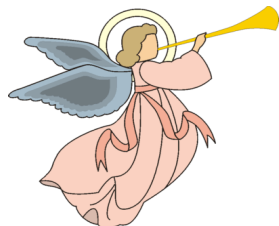
"Step out of your comfort zone... Don't be afraid to open up to God's call..." "Our Lady is one of the best examples in which she was willing to step forward in answer to the call of God. This became the critical point in our history of salvation when she became the mother of our Savior.. St. Magdalene of Canossa was another important example for us..." The words of Fr. Paul Chu in his homily still resonate in my mind for the past few days.



On May 5, 2012, a Mass was celebrated in Canadian Martyrs Church for the Feast Day of St. Magdalene of Canossa. We were very fortunate to have Fr. Paul Chu, Fr. Mak and Fr. Francis Chang, as co-celebrants in the 9:30 Mass on Saturday for this occasion. Fr. Chu reminded us the importance of breaking out and stepping forward. Like the teaching of Jesus who used the example of a seed which has to 'die in order to produce much fruits'.

After Mass, we all congregated in the church hall to sing our beloved school song, which always brought back nostalgic memories of our school days. There was a turn out of about 100 participants. We were also very honoured that the Our Lady of Canadian Martyrs Legion of Mary came to join us, with the Lay Canossian members preparing all the food and refreshments for us, which added to our delight. The food was as always delicious and the cake was enormous.

Thank you, Sister Cecilia and all the sisters of Canossian Convent for stepping forward in answer to God's call. In moments of solitude, I couldn't help but wondered where I would end up, and what I would be doing today without the constant fostering, continual cultivation of faith and the education, which we received under the care of the Canossian sisters. We are indeed very proud of our Canossian identity.



AGM Dinner

Esther Ng

Pui Tak

Our AGM Dinner was held on May 8, 2012. It was a great opportunity to have Sister Kay and Sister Anna Maria joined our dinner this year. Our guests fully seated the five tables at the Fisherman's Terrace Restaurant at Aberdeen Center in Richmond.

After our annual reporting from Carmen Leung, our chairman, and Esther Ng, the Treasurer, dinner started around 7:30pm. As our guests were enjoying the delicious food, we also sold raffle tickets. From the generosity of our guests, we raised \$410 and the whole amount was donated to Chihuahua Project.

At the final raffle ticket lucky draw, our honorable guest Sister got the grand prize. The dinner ended at around 10:30pm. Our guests left with happiness in their hearts, looking forward to gather again in the coming Christmas at which time CCAA would celebrate its 25th Anniversary.



Summer Gateway

Beatrice Yeung

Canossa

The CCAA embarked on a summer getaway on the Canada Day long weekend. The trip was off to an early start as the tour bus picked us up at 6 a.m., however that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the group towards the experience we were about to share communally.



We got through the United States border much faster than expected, thus the itinerary was adjusted to allow more time to shop at the Seattle Premium Outlet mall before the sightseeing commenced. After shopping and having lunch at the Tulalip Casino Buffet, we made our way to see the Olympia Glass Bridge. The Glass Bridge displayed over 100 pieces of uniquely crafted pieces of glass spread out throughout the bridge for our viewing experience; needless to say it was the most scenic and photo-friendly portion of the trip. We wrapped up day one of the trip with dinner before checking into our hotel rooms in Downtown Olympia at around 9 p.m.

The second leg of the trip got off to good start with complimentary breakfast at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. The action-packed day was highlighted by a trip to the Underwater Military Museum, where we got to touch and feel authentic submarines used by the United States Navy. It was very interactive being able to use one of the submarines' telescopes to look out at where our bus was parked outside! We took a lunch break in Little Norway before proceeding to visit Snohomish, which provided a very different experience than most touristy spots, as the town prided itself on its vintage aura; most of the shops in the town sold antiques that illustrated the story of the town's colourful past. We also briefly stopped in Puget Sound to observe the sights and sounds of that community.

While it was certainly a nascent experience to spend Canada Day in the outskirts of Seattle, Washington, this summer getaway provided our association with a chance to bond closer to our families and other members.



On Catholics Coming Home - Some Personal Reflections

Linda Fung SHCC Macau

Have you ever travelled afar or gone on business trips, and found yourself tired upon coming home? The notion of HOME comforts the body, warms the heart and spirit. With the Church calling all Catholics to come home in this Year of Faith, let us explore some aspects of home.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and lived in Galilee. His human life on earth had a few places He called 'home'. But in His short life, Jesus points and leads us to His and our eternal home. And many Christians, from the early Church to our generation, try to follow His direction. Some journeyed smoothly but others went astray.

Dr. Scott Hahn and his wife Kimberley in their book entitled "Rome – Sweet Home" told the beautiful and challenging story of their homecoming journey. Upon finding and striving to live the Truth of the Catholic Church, the couple suffered a temporary separation spiritually from one another, as well as from family and friends. Finally, they arrived in "Rome" their home within the Catholic faith, filled with joy and peace. This success has led thousands of Protestant pastors and congregations to a similar path.

Resonating our Archbishop's initiative to call all Catholics to come home, I suggest that we visit the following website <http://www.catholicscomehome.org/index.php> where answers to questions such as the Church Teaching, Marriage and Divorce, Moral Issues, Confession, Death and Grieving can be found. There is a section on Real People, Real Stories. Whether you are non-Catholics, Catholics, or used to be Catholics, there are answers for your many questions.

Between Dec. 13 and Jan. 20, major TV stations in Vancouver will air commercials produced by Catholics Come Home. Parishes have been preparing outreach plans to welcome those inspired by the commercials. In a fundraising dinner on October 25, Archbishop Michael Miller urged Catholics to welcome home our lost brothers and sisters with gentleness, kindness and genuineness.

In this Year of Faith, let us follow Jesus' footsteps faithfully, receive the Holy Sacraments enthusiastically and study the Bible and the teaching of the Church diligently. Let us open and dig deep into the treasures of Catholicism and pray fervently, so as to equip ourselves for the task to invite home our family, co-workers, neighbours and friends who were once active Catholics. Let us be prepared to open our hearts when we hear Jesus say *"Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share a meal at that person's side"* (Rev. 3:20). Let us long for the day when we can sing together with the angels and saints *"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty..."* as foretold by St. John in the book of Revelation (4:8). Let us witness the joyful moment when *"God will wipe away all tears from their eyes..."* (Rev.21:4) in our Eternal Home.

