



聖瑪竇宗徒堂區
St. Matthew the Apostle Parish

*"Go, and make disciples from all nations... I am with you always until the end of this world."
-Mt. 28:19-20*

ENGLISH COMMUNITY

April 2018

Resurrection and Life

-Fr. Salvador Sanchez Duran



We have just finished the celebration of a festival in the Chinese calendar for the special memory of our ancestors, that is called "Ching Ming Festival". In the Chinese culture, this date has a particular meaning, we know that whatever is good in us, is because our ancestors worked hard to leave us with a better life. For if we do not have the contribution and effort given by our ancestors, our lives could not have progress and improvement. Therefore; we should respect them. A deeper meaning behind respect depends on our faith, because we believe that after death, they still have lives, a different kind of life but in some way in relation with us.

On the Oscar Ceremony of this year, there is an award winning animation talking about life and death...Coco. The film used traditional culture of Mexico as a background expressing what the people there believe. People after death will go to Elysium and will have lives different from the present. The theme song entitled 'Remember Me' also won as the best original song. Let's say, in this world, if those ancestors believed that there is someone who can still remember them. And if they remember their ancestors, they will have the opportunity to go to eternal life. They will have eternal life after death. Does this message have any connection with our belief? Let us have a look on the connection of the past festivals of Ching Ming and Jesus's Resurrection.

It is undeniable that what peaceful lives we can enjoy now on earth is the fruit planted by our ancestors through their sacrifice, devotion and hard-works. They believed their coming on earth is to fulfill the mission by serving others. For this they will have eternal life after death.

On the other hand, for our mission as Christians, we also believe that we will live with greater happiness and meaning by the way we serve others. Relying on the faith given by God. We know the truth of life is to be resurrected with Christ after death. Just as the teaching of St. Paul, "God raised the Lord and will also raise Us by His Power" 1Cor. 6:14. Hence we are keeping the hope of resurrection to finish the mission on earth, expecting the everlasting joy. For this we will especially thank and remember those ancestors who contributed in helping us to gain the eternal life in the future.

As you can see, it does not matter how divided the countries and how many different cultures we have, still we can find that we have the same view of lives, death and life after death, this could be also the message of Us Christians for this time of Easter. The Lord sent you to the Earth with a mission, do your best to accomplish this mission, the Lord will help you always and at the end will give the best gift: resurrection and everlasting life.

We do not need to be remembered by our people to participate in the eternal life. We must be sure that is a Gift from Christ, we only need to live our life like Him, serve like Him, give our life like Him... with him, participate in this life and also with Him, participate in the everlasting life, He is our way.

Brothers and sisters, we have a very important mission to do, which is through the sharing of hope with other people, to let them know the importance and value of giving your time, your energy, your life... in serving our brothers and sisters, you are building your own reward for your life, Resurrection, the gift from God. Let us share our hope of resurrection to our brothers and sisters.

God bless you and Happy Easter.

Music Ministry Seminar



What do you usually do when you got a new appliance? Are you going to properly read the manual of instructions or immediately operate it according to your own intuition?

The Speaker at the beginning of the seminar suggested reading first your manual if you own a brand new washing machine in order to ensure that it will function well. Likewise, as a member of the Music Ministry it is also important to know and learn about what you are in to as there is the General Instruction of the Roman Missal which serves as a manual.

It was an amazing beginning of the year for 2018 as the Music ministry-choir gathered together in joining the Music Catholic Worship seminar last January 21 at Sai wan, Kennedy Town. The said event was participated about hundreds of people from different Catholic parishes here in Hong Kong. The speaker was Bro. Rufino Zaragoza. He is nurtured in Franciscan spirituality for over 30 years, he serves as a liturgical music consultant based in the Diocese of Orange, California. Currently, He spends half of each year developing English worship resources and supporting "English mass" choirs in Southeast Asia while based in Saigon, Vietnam.

The seminar was quite informative, it talked about the basic role of choir, participation of assembly and selection of songs. It is insightful in a way that the information helped us to understand what choir really is. Admittedly, I thought being a choir is just meant to sing in the mass and led the assembly, I was enlighten knowing that there is depth in it and that is being a part of the whole assembly praying and singing. Therefore, I would say the essence is not about performing or being a performer however the most important is about giving life and clarity to the message of the songs, so that it will resonate whoever will hear it and somehow lead in the path of spirituality. People from different walks of life come to church to pray, some prayed for thanksgiving, some are struggling and having difficulties in life. The songs we listen to can impact and create something in our inner self that can make us feel the overwhelming presence of God.



It was challenging for the choir to pay more attention on the songs that are appropriate for

the theme readings and accordingly to the Liturgical Seasons, thus, this will focus on bringing the gospel to the people and the world. It was encouraged that the song repertoire has the message about, hope, uni-

ty, justice, peace, reconciliation and creation of the world. Indeed, it was also put into consideration the familiarity of the songs so that the parishioners could also participate. Part of it is to practice before the mass starts, this maybe helpful in gathering the assembly and can lead them to become familiar of the songs.

We hope that as a part of the choir Ministry we will be motivated and be responsive in the service, inspired and committed in spreading the gospel.

—Choir Group

My Trouble at the Confession

I remember clearly how I felt when I had my first confession as a young kid, I was maybe 7 or 8 years of age. I was so nervous and I don't know what to do but I was able to utter some words and confessed about my disobedience towards my parents and there I heard a very kind advise about my confession. Kid as I am, way back, I kept that in my mind and I always tried my best to be good to my parents though not perfect but that helped me a lot in my growing up as a teen and to adulthood.

Until today, confession gives me the feeling of uneasiness and disturbing emotions and at some point I thought I would rather not confess, but I know too that I must do it. In my lack of understanding, I even questioned why I need to say it to the priest. But at the same time, I know how good I felt after receiving this sacrament. I do whisper a prayer about my intentions and to better educate myself I listened to talks and read books that can help me. This way too I got to review what I have forgotten.

In the catechism of the Catholic Church it states that, **Penance and Reconciliation is the sacrament of God's loving forgiveness by which we are set free from sin and reconciled with God and the church, which we have wounded by our sins. This sacrament helps us to grow in God's grace, and it strengthens us to avoid sins and to lead holier lives.** (1422)

We receive the gift of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation from Jesus, who gave the apostles the power to forgive sins. (1441)

He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (Jn 20:22-23)

There is something about the mercy of God that is out of the grasp of my understanding that often times makes me tear up at the mention of it and then it is the thought of His boundless mercy that I was able to want to draw near the confessional.

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I maybe feeling tense or uneasy about confessing my sins but once I left the confessional I never regretted it. It is pure peacefulness that I felt.

On the first Sunday of Lent, February 25, the English community once again organized a recollection together with our Parish Priest as the speaker with the theme, **Lent: A Time of Giving and Forgiving** and as always every time we have a recollection we were given a chance to have the sacrament of Confession. Personally, this kind of activity gave me that courage I need to go receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Doing it together with friends gives me the strength to do so. I hope many of us will be encourage to join this kind of activity as it is organized twice a year during Advent season and Lent season. The organizers put a lot of effort just for everyone to join the activity and that it may help us to grow and nourish our faith.

Isn't it awesome that we have easy accesses to God's grace through the sacraments? But still it is our choice to make the move. Life is fleeting but the impact of our choices will affect our soul for eternity. Choose the best and that is to remain under God's grace. – *L. Lutwachen*

My Life Being a Christian



I started going to church often when I was already matured and through church I became a better person.

Before, church never meant anything to me. It was something other

people did on Sundays. I went to church very seldom just like Christmas and some special occasions. I didn't even know what is Easter and how it is differ from Lent.

Until such time I arrived here in Hongkong as OFW. I tried a lot of churches. One Sunday morning of November 2016, I went to a church with a friend. On the church ,I don't understand my feelings . I don't really know how to explain it except for I felt that I fit in and really had a place that I belonged. I considered my self very lucky to have found St Matthew the Apostle Parish.

I joined as usherette member. I was really shy, but it helped me become more confident. I discovered, helping as liturgy member is a great way to serve God. I volunteered also as catechist, because the way to learn is to teach. We all are called to continue to grow in our own faith, and the best way to

learn is to teach. Catechist speak the truth about God, faith and morals. Sharing the faith is an honor. Our own faith will come alive. By acting on what we believe. We become a participant in building up God's Kingdom. As catechist, you show your own family that you value religious education. Taking time out of your life to teach the faith shows your own children, grandchildren, siblings and family members that you put a high priority or religious education. You may find you are teaching them as much by your examples as you are your students by your lesson plan.

My life forever changed through Christ, and this is why no one will be able to turn me away from Him. He is my God and has proven Himself to me over and over again. He has changed my life because He has renewed me.

As for my walk with God, I continue to fall short, but it's not how many times you fall-- its how



many times you get back up. Everyday I renew my quest for God with an open mind, and I have been given confidence in my journey. It is up to us only to turn to Christ, to accept the gifts that he offers us. If we do, If we turn to Him and away from sin we will find that we no longer need to worry very much about spiritual growth, that such growth will become integral part of our lives. Spiritual growth will turn out to be simply our earthly journey to God.

As a Christian, I hope in something more. I am trying to become a brighter light for the Father to be more like the God I believe in...never quite making it but always trying to be an exemplify his glory and honor. He helps me to never give up, despite how the ways of the world can weather my resolve. I am privileged to feel the peace that comes with a developing detachment from materials goods and fleeting worldly honors. Instead get to spend my life seeking the truth, His truth, wherever it maybe found. I place my trust in Him and thanking Him for not giving up on me. I'm excited about growing in this new relationship with God. I know it won't always be easy. I know you'll continue to change me, and I'm going to trust in you .God thank you for your amazing grace.

–*Felisa B. Pulvera*

