

OYP BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN

ISSUE#24 | AUGUST 2017

How do you Jesus
the greatest joy
of my soul
How do you Jesus
the greatest joy
of my soul



Office for Young People
CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SINGAPORE
encounter discipleship communion mission



GET CONNECTED:
2 LORONG LOW KOON, SINGAPORE 536449 T 6285 2571 | 6286 0341
W www.oyp.org.sg For enquiries, please email: info.oyp@catholic.org.sg





This MONTH

Dear Friends,
We trust that we find you well! We are excited to come to you once again with another installment of our newsletter. We are also happy to present our new look!

This month, we share with you about our Combined Communities retreat, our experience at Asian Youth Day and bring you some practical tips on how to keep that flame for Jesus burning bright!

We now look forward to TREASURE#8 at the end of the month and ask for your prayers as we prepare to welcome our participants to OYP!

We pray that the stories of our young people will serve as encouragement for you in your own faith journey. Let us move onward together for the glory of our Lord!

*In His Love,
Anita and the team at OYP*

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- I. OYP COMMUNITY**
Come As You Are
- II. TESTIMONY & THANKSGIVING**
Combined Communities Retreat
- II. ASIAN YOUTH DAY 2017**
- III. POST-RETREAT: 5 Tips on Keeping your Fire Ablaze**

GET TO KNOW

- I. OUR TEAM**

FEATURES

OYP COMMUNITY

COME AS YOU ARE



'Come as You Are' community invites you to join them! We welcome all in JC and NS! Also, regardless of whether you're finishing ITE/JC/poly, awaiting uni, we welcome all youths who are going through a transition period. It isn't easy following Jesus when everything around you is changing, but it's much more enjoyable when you have a community of like-minded peers journeying together. To join us for sharings and fellowship sessions, you can head over to our page at <http://oyp.org.sg/oyp-family/caya/> for more info, and to indicate your interest. We'll get in touch with you shortly after. Alternatively, you could just pop by our sessions from 10am – 12 noon every Saturday at the Office for Young People – you're always welcome. So just come as you are & spread the Good News! See you there!.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers ... And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2: 42-47



TESTIMONY & THANKSGIVING
COMBINED COMMUNITY RETREAT

Gerald Lee from OYP welcoming the young adult communities to the retreat

by Rebekah Goh

Many of us came with tired minds and bodies as we arrived at the retreat on Friday night, and what better way to start the retreat than with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! Coupled with the Prayer Ministry during Adoration, it was the start of a weekend totally surrendered to God, disconnected from the outside world and focusing on fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

From the start of the retreat, it was clear that this was different from the usual retreats we were used to (Treasure retreats, Conversion Experience Retreats, silent retreats, etc.). It wasn't about us and our personal lives, but about growth among our respective communities, which are planted and rooted in the source of life: Jesus Himself.



Praise and worship

What exactly is a Catholic community and why is it necessary for us to have a retreat? Fr Jude shared in his session that we all start off similarly like the early Christians where "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (Acts 2: 42-47). All Christians are called to be disciples of Jesus, and what better way to live out our discipleship than with fellow pilgrims? Together on this journey towards our common end goal, community living in OYP Communities is based on Communion, Prayer, Peer Witnessing and Mission. And OYP's vision of our end goal? As Rev 7:9-17 says, "There was a great multitude that no one could count, from every

nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands... These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In short, we became aware of our mission to point others to Jesus, to bring this "great multitude" to Heaven to worship our One True God.

Over the course of the retreat, many brothers and sisters came forward to thank God for His blessings and how He has touched their lives through community. Mark from 1 Peter community shared about his most beautiful moment during the retreat: during the Adoration, he clearly heard a voice saying "Look at me" and that was when he knew that despite his worried

“ Guess I learned a thing or two about community living from the retreat and that is: to always be rooted in the faith, and to live with conviction. ”

nature, this was truly a lesson in humility, where the only solution is to trust in God and leave it all up to Him. He added, "many other wonderful things happened during the retreat that I thank God for, such as the ability to mend relationships with a brother in Christ during the Reconciliation. This is truly a testament of taking the log out of my own eye."

Another sister, Jeanette from Sinners Anonymous, said "During the praying over for Gifts & Charisms, I felt the participants' fire for God and the strong presence of the Holy Spirit working within all at the retreat." She was also affirmed during the retreat that God indeed knows the desire of our hearts to serve Him.

Having been in my community 7 Graces for a little less than a year, I've come to realise what

community living is all about. It's not the pseudo friendships where we're all nice and friendly to one another on the surface, but true acceptance of one another according to our motto of 'Come As You Are'. If Jesus accepts each one of us, why should we be any different to another? True community living calls for reconciliation and that's exactly what we did in the retreat. Approaching another to bare your soul and seek forgiveness in order to achieve reconciliation and live peacefully in the community is something not done often in the secular world. Yes, things will never be the same again, and we are one step closer to our end goal because we can forgive.

As a soon-to-be mother, I too am looking for a way to build up the community that will be my family, and to center this community on God. I learned a thing or two about community living from the retreat and that is: to always be rooted in the faith, and to live with conviction.



The young adult communities and service team

Well, if you're a young working adult who is seeking to journey with other pilgrims on earth, join a community today and stand for what you really believe in.

Dear friend, if reading this has stirred a desire in your heart to be part of a young adult community, we invite you to visit our website at: <http://oyyp.org.sg/oyyp-family/young-adults-communities/> to find out more about how to get connected.

TESTIMONY & THANKSGIVING ASIAN YOUTH DAY 2017

by Vanessa Peters

15 Singaporean youth delegates together with OYP Chaplains Fr. Jude David and Fr. Brian D'Souza attended the 7th Asian Youth Day in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The program consisted of Days in the Diocese (DID) program from 29th July to 1st August 2017 followed by the main event from 2nd to 6th August 2017.



The warm welcome at the airport

Days In the Diocese

DID was a great opportunity for participants to become joyful witnesses of the Gospel through living with local Catholic families and learning to overcome differences of language and culture. Together with contingents from Vietnam, Mongolia, Atambua and Kupang, Singapore was attached to the Diocese of Malang.

On our arrival at the airport, we were welcomed with a hearty song and dance from the Malang youths. Their energy and enthusiasm was a lovely surprise for us. Upon arrival at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Malang, we were warmly welcomed and introduced to our host families from the various parishes within the diocese.

Through our respective host families, we got to experience Indonesian family life. Living with the host family called us out of our comfort zones as we had to live with them and depend on them. This really caused us to depend on God and to see Him in each other. The host families' kindness



Group photo after opening mass at Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

and love in welcoming us was indeed edifying. Deborah Lee, 28, from the Church of St Vincent De Paul, shared, *"I had never fully appreciated the simplest gift of speech and understanding before this. I struggled with the sense of isolation I felt from not being able to understand the conversations around me. I was thankful for the little conversations I had with my host family and their efforts to help me learn some Bahasa Indonesia. Nevertheless, most of my days were spent in silence with my thoughts and perhaps it was an invitation from the Lord to be still (and silent) and know that He is always close. I was grateful for my parish community who took the time to plan activities for all the participants and though we weren't able to converse as fully, their love and affection through their actions touched my heart. My host family also went out of*

their way to welcome me into their culture, making sure I got a chance to try new Indonesian food at every meal and always checking in on me to make sure I was comfortable in their home. Though the program was not as explicit in living out our faith as I had hoped, I was able to see Christ in the community and family around me and am thankful for the encounter."

DID taught us the importance of being with family and to be generous with our time and attention, for it is indeed through the family unit that we come to know Christ.

Main Event: Asian Youth Day

The theme was a call for Asian youths to proclaim the Gospel joyfully in this multicultural continent. The theme song incorporated dance which embodied great joy through actions and "stomping" beats. In the theme song arrangement, there was a shout, *"Asian Youth Day. Joss! Joss!"*. Joss is a typical exclamation from Indonesia which is the English equivalent of awesome.

During the opening ceremony, the Bishop preached that it is through Jesus Christ that we are unified: *"That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me"* (John 17:21). The daily Eucharistic celebration highlighted the teachings of our Lord Jesus on Pentecost - the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first community which *"brought together the many languages of the earth in*

profession of the one faith". This motif was also the basis of our AYD program.

The intensive 4 day program touched on the issues and challenges facing the youth of today. For the exposure program, participants were assigned to different Catholic communities to witness how they made Jesus the focus of their missions. Germaine Lim, 26, from the Church of the Holy Family Singapore, visited a Catholic Elementary school located in a



Exposure trip to SD Kanisius Kokap school

small village, called SD Kanisius Kokap school. She said of the experience, *"Although there are only 9 students in the school, the teachers are fully dedicated to educating the students there. Their dedication to fulfilling their vocation and their resilience to keep going even when the going gets tough is really inspiring"*. Participants were also invited to attend different workshops which discussed youth and the social challenges of today. The participating contingents were also tasked to set up booths for an exhibition to showcase how youth from the various countries respond to Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care For Our Common*



Country exhibit in response to Laudato Si

Home. Our local contingent touched on consumerism and environmental degradation and our response to the mission of protecting God's creation.

Through the workshops, exhibitions and cultural exposure, the Holy Spirit inspired us to reflect on our faith experiences and discern how we can continue to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live out the mission of the Church. In the midst of the packed program, we were able to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharistic Adoration. It was a touching sight to witness 2000 participants adoring Jesus.



Singapore contingent dancing to Rend Collective's Joy of the Lord

During the closing ceremony, the Singapore contingent shared *"The Joy of the Lord"* through dance. Though many of us were not accustomed to dancing as a form of

praise, we rallied together and offered up our dance for the glory of God!

At the final Eucharistic celebration, the Asian youth were urged to be joyful signs of the Gospel as we prayed to grow in faith, hope and love. We prayed for the grace of the Holy Spirit to bravely follow God's will and spread the good news among peoples. We were reminded that we are full of joy because we are loved by the Lord.

AYD was a reminder that we are to demonstrate our love for the Lord by first loving our neighbour. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised ..."*



Closing mass at the Air Force base in Yogyakarta

As we ended our pilgrimage, we continued to pray for the grace to fulfil our mission to proclaim Jesus joyfully. Jesus Christ! Joss! Joss! Joss!

The next Asian Youth Day will be hosted by India in 2020.

FAITH & FORMATION: POST-RETREAT

5 Tips on Keeping Your Fire Ablaze

by Alexis Lim Zhen Ting

There's something mysterious about being within the fences of 2 Lorong Low Koon.

In there, my heart's quietly and stably ablaze – after the initial flash of red and yellow sparks, I find my fire dancing to the beat of the Lord's soft whispers, especially throughout the 10 days I've spent at the School of Christian Leadership (SOCL).

Out there though, the flame cracks and fizzles. On good days, the flames leap in excitement. On bad ones, the loud voices of the world almost snuff out my convictions; the fire is left dimly glowing, threatening to go out.

But that's the thing – retreats are meant to kindle that fire to sustain us for the rest of the time that we're not in a retreat setting. The big question is then: How do we keep this fire burning? Better still, how do we fan this fire into a consuming flame?

Here are 5 things I found helpful for my spiritual journey post-retreat:



1. Revisit the sparks: Post-retreat reflections

I remember when my friends first asked me about my SOCL experience, I whipped out my notebook, squinted through the jungle of text that I have written throughout the 10 days, looking out for the “!!!!!!!” marks I've littered around to identify key takeaways. At the end of that conversation, I felt like I hardly did the retreat justice.

I decided to sit down to reflect and consolidate the truths that were revealed to me throughout the retreat. The exercise itself was refreshing, re-experiencing the retreat days after being immersed in the world.

This page titled “TRUTHS FROM SOCL” with succinct points of my reflections proved useful beyond the reflection exercise. Whenever I felt like I needed spiritual reinforcements, going back to these revelations reminded me of the messages from God that ignited the fire within me in the first place.



2. Feed the fire: Routine-based commitments

Retreats are usually refreshing because they throw us off our usual worldly routine. They help us establish a routine that is God-centered: Divine office, morning prayer time, worship, sessions, night prayer, ... Our fire for God roars during the retreat precisely because of this unwavering focus on God.

Practically speaking though, out of a retreat, our daily activities would still involve our worldly obligations (studying, working, etc.). To continue to feed this fire, we need to change our daily routine to make it one that involves prioritizing God. Routine-based commitments can come in big and small forms: A simple Our Father in the morning, saying grace at every meal, attending daily mass...

What I have found most helpful is reading and reflecting on the gospel every night. It has become my daily bread; in the space of the short ten, fifteen minutes that I dedicate fully to Jesus, I receive the messages from God that reminds me to live out my identity as a child of God just as I did at the retreat. Two bonuses: I feel readier to receive the Word at mass, and better equipped with bible knowledge that comes in handy in my conversations about God!



3. Tinder the fire: Community

Hold your horses, do not go firing up the app. Tinder, before the app marred all connotations of it, is a piece of material that burns easily, used for catching fire from sparks.

That is what my brothers and sisters in Christ are for me in my spiritual journey. When I momentarily drown in the voices of the world, they cover my ears and remind me about the whispers in the silence. When they are tempted to take the wide and spacious way out, I block their path and nudge them towards the narrow gate.

Even when our flames are dim, there's still something in us that is easily combustible. We just need our community to bring back the fiery passions within us.

The tip is therefore to look for your tinder. Surround yourself with people who are as invested as you are in each other's growth. Check in with each other constantly. Carry out your routine commitments together. Become comfortable with asking and answering the “How is your walk with the Lord” question. Let your convictions inspire each others', and keep that flame alive.



4. Radiate the fire: Testify

Here is a charcoal on fire. How do you grow this fire? Throw more charcoals in the pile.

I find that testifying for Christ is truly powerful in sharing the desire for Christ to someone else, but also renewing the fire within me.

I only experienced the power of testimony when a friend in distress reached out. We met and talked, and something clicked – I found myself sharing a particular truth I took away from SOCL that moved her. I could feel the spirit working within me as I shared that experience, finding the right words to be the conduit of the joy of the Lord within me.

By the time we parted, I felt as renewed as I wanted her to be renewed, and more on fire than ever before.

I'm not saying that you should pick up the phone, go down your contact list and start raving non-stop about your awesome retreat experience. I think that the desire to share will come when the Perfect opportunities arise. What we need to do is then to first be aware of the truths that we've been blessed with (See Tip #1), and second to commit to respond to these promptings.



5. Return to the Source: Prayer

At the end of the day, it's not your own effort that keeps your fire burning, but the graces of the Lord.

When you're feeling low on fuel, keep in prayer. The fact that you recognize and are probably not contented with a dimly glowing fire is already a sign of God's grace working powerfully within you. The desire to keep your fire ablaze is from God too! Continue to pray, have faith that the Spirit will ignite your fire in good time.



OUR TEAM
AMANDA CHOO, 21

Q1) What led you to volunteer at OYP?

OYP has been a place of comfort and refuge in my journey closer towards Christ! Volunteering at OYP was my way of saying thank you and allowing Christ to use me as an instrument in building His kingdom here!

Q2) What gives you the most joy in your work at OYP?

I had the privilege of listening to many testimonies and faith stories and it really warmed my heart to see that so many have encountered and found the precious treasure that is Jesus, here! There is really great joy in witnessing brothers and sisters come alive and claiming His love for them.

Q3) Name one person that has had a great influence in your life.

My mom! Her strength and faithfulness to God in times of trial continues to inspire me!

Q4) Name one country that you would love to visit and tell us why.

Canada!!!! I really want to explore the hiking trails in the mountains and forests! I hope to experience and be in awe of the beauty of God's creation! Their magnitude makes me feel so small but yet so loved by Him!!



OUR TEAM
JOSHUA LOW, 25

Q1) What led you to volunteer at OYP?

I wanted to deepen my spiritual life in addition to serving the Lord. I found that at OYP, I could do both these things and so began my 6 months' internship at OYP.

Q2) What gives you the most joy in your work at OYP?

The opportunity to meet so many others seeking a relationship with Christ and to be able to journey with others in their relationship with Christ is the most joyful thing I experience here at OYP. In addition, working with the team at OYP is so wonderful. The staff are very encouraging and centred on Christ. I really enjoy the community we have here and all the times of bonding and fellowship. It truly feels like a home with people who care deeply about you.

Q3) Name one person that has had a great influence in your life.

My Grandmother, Cecilia. I lived with my grandmother and throughout it all, she really showed me what it is like to show unconditional love. I experienced that from her and she really inspired me with her devotion to Our Lady. She would always have a rosary in hand or nearby wherever she was and always prayed the rosary relentlessly. She took care of me till her last days and I am who I am because of the love she showered on me.

Q4) Name one country that you would love to visit and tell us why.

I would like to visit Israel because I would like to go to Holy Land one day to see all the biblical sites, and experience what it must have been like many centuries ago. I want to visit the sites where Jesus and the apostles were and to walk the path that the Lord took up to Calvary.



OUR TEAM

DEBBIE LEE, 28**Q1) What led you to volunteer at OYP?**

Having received so much from the family at OYP who have helped me to understand God's love for me, revealed my identity as His beloved daughter and that I am truly made to thrive and for so much more, I just wanted to share this life-changing revelation with whomever needs to hear it.

Q2) What gives you the most joy in your work at OYP?

Waking up excited, knowing that I can do God's work and build His kingdom here on earth every day!

Q3) Name one person that has had a great influence in your life.

My mum has greatly inspired me with her love and self-sacrifice for the sake of my family and has always put all of us before herself. She has shown me what it means to persevere and to love wholeheartedly.

Q4) Name one country that you would love to visit and tell us why.

Iceland, because I've heard it's beautiful!



OUR TEAM

JOANNA CHNG, 24**Q1) What led you to volunteer at OYP?**

I wanted to give something back to OYP for the many things they have blessed me with. And I thought that I should give my time!

Q2) What gives you the most joy in your work at OYP?

Being able to serve in different areas brings me great joy! From serving in the kitchen to being present for people and praying for them.

Q3) Name one person that has had a great influence in your life.

My mother. The love and faithfulness she has shown has inspired me to keep loving and to keep being faithful.

Q4) Name one country that you would love to visit and tell us why.

Japan ! The food!

GET IN TOUCH



OFFICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
2 Lorong Low Koon, Singapore
536449



CALL US
6285 2571 | 6286 0341



ENQUIRIES
info.oyp@catholic.org.sg



WEBSITE
<http://oyp.org.sg>

FOLLOW US!



Office for Young People



oyp.sg



Office for Young People