

Message from Fr. John

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

October 7th is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Although this year it occurs on a Sunday, which is celebrated as the 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time, we can still venerate her, and pray that she grants peace to the world.

We know the power of reciting the Rosary from historical evidence. Christian countries repelled the intrusion of the Ottoman Empire into Europe in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. To commemorate the help received from Our Lady, invoked through the recitation of the Rosary by the faithful, in the victory in 1517 in the battle of Lepanto, Pope Pius V instituted this Feast day. It has gradually evolved from a thanksgiving for victory, to meditation on the mysteries of Christ. Truly, the Church realizes that it is a narrow, and most likely unwelcome, interpretation of the Rosary as only a weapon of war; when warfare should not be celebrated, and victory is at best ethereal. Today, the Rosary is a proactive and holy form of prayer.

The Rosary has a fixed format of prayer, but at the same time, it includes a flexible pattern for meditating on the miracles. It invites us to join Mary, the Queen of the Apostles, through the tonal repetition like the breaking surf, to gallop through the entirety of the Gospels. From the Word becoming conceived, through the Passover of Christ, and culminating in Mary attaining the glory of Queen of Heaven, as a representative of all mankind, we are immersed in this never changing and yet ever changing prayer; the flow of this tiny stream of prayers is more eloquent than the most flowery of oratories.

The First Reading on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is taken from the Acts of the Apostles (1:12-14.) When Mary and the apostles all devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, it coalesced to form the foundation of the empathy between the disciples and the Church. Just as the daily prayers of those in religious orders, whether singly or in groups, let them attain unity with the worldwide Church, so the prayer of the gospel – the Rosary – connects all the faithful, through all ages, levels, and lands, to echo this broad and deep ode of salvation.

The Responsorial Psalm is the longest soliloquy by Mary in the Gospel. Her sudden eloquence is due solely to the fact that she was praying to God. This canticle has come down to us through the ages, and shows the most heartfelt thanks that Mary expressed, in her realization of the omnipotence and great love of God.

The Gospel (Luke 1:26-38) was emphatic in describing Mary in meditation. Through meditation, she bore the Word of God, to raise the curtain upon salvation; through meditation, she measured the work

of God, and searched for her own role (Luke 2:51); and through meditation, she heard the voice of God, and received a taste of the bliss of heaven (Luke 8:19-21).

Through the recitation of the Rosary, we can be as the apostles in the Acts of the Apostles, and pray in the company of Mary, and meditate how God, through Christ, won the triumph over darkness for us. Holy Mary, through the special blessing of the recitation of the Rosary, pray you deepen our devotion to prayer. Queen of the Rosary, pray for us.

Yours in Christ,
Father John Lam S.D.B.
October 7th, 2012

St. Bridget's *News*

Feast Day of the Chinese Martyr-Saints

Dominic

St. Bridget was honored with the presence of His Excellency, Bishop Alexander Salazar, the Vicar for the Ethnic Ministry, to celebrate the Feast Day for Martyr-Saints on 2012. (the official Bishop Salazar the combined Mass. In his homily, church, Bishop speculated that in the population of China would be the highest in the Universal Church, and would outnumber all of the "Catholic countries in Latin America". Bishop remarked how marvelous the Holy Spirit works, history repeating itself over and over, that in time of adversity, when the church was attacked and persecuted, the numbers of the faithful seems to flourish! Numbers of vocation from oppressed lands seems to grow. He continued, "It is not important to remember how these saints met their



the Chinese Sunday July 2, date is July 9th) officiated over Chinese / English to a packed Salazar 25 to 30 years, Catholics in

martyrdoms, how they died, but rather it is more important to remember how they lived their faith.”

Bishop Salazar reminded us that as Chinese Catholics, though living outside China, we too, have to prepare ourselves in the forecasted growth of Chinese in the church. We have to encourage our young people to respond to their calls to enter into priestly, religious and lay vocation in order to meet the needs to serve and to minister to the people.

Bishop Salazar was delighted to see the involvement of our young adults in the church. He encouraged them to continue to evangelize among their peers. He was in full support of the upcoming



California Chinese Catholic Living Camp (CACCLC) headed by Nathan Lau and Damien Wang. He plans to spend one day at the camp with the young adults

After the mass, Bishop Salazar greeted parishioners at the front

of the church, chatted and took pictures with them. Members of Parish Pastoral Council and Fr. Lam hosted a luncheon for Bishop Salazar, in the rectory after the photo session. This was his third visit to St. Bridget for his Excellency. As he left, Bishop Salazar expressed his delight with the visit and reminded Fr. Lam to invite him back soon.

Finance Executive Council

In the mass for the Chinese Martyrs, the outgoing members of the Finance Executive Council were honored and recognized for their years of service to the church. Bishop Alex Salazar and Fr. Lam presented the members with a certificate of Appreciation and a small gift for their dedication. Dr. Won Ng, served for nine years as the chair of the council; Maggie Lau, served as the



council member since 1994 and Vice Chair for the past nine year;



Raphael Ho served in the council for nine years and Lourdes Hor served the council for over six years.

The incoming Finance council members were also inducted. The new chair is

Joseph Lee; Secretary is Rita Chu; members are Patrick Mak, Amy Wong, Maggie Tsui, Connie Sum and Maria Yu.

The Finance Council members serve as the adviser to the Pastor on finance matters of the parish. In addition, the members are charged to take care of all the financial operations in the parish. May the Holy Spirit guide them in their service to the parish.

Immigration Mass

Dominic

“We are the universal family of God, one family drawn from many different races and nations. We are all citizens of God’s Family” the principal celebrant, Archbishop Jose Gomez said repeatedly during the first Mass in recognition of all immigrants in Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral on Sunday, July 22nd.

Over 100+ parishioners of St. Bridget



joined the 3000+ people packed in the standing room only cathedral to pray and give thanks to this nation of immigrants. We are reminded that most of us, other than the Native American, the indigenous people and the African American that were forced to this land as slaves, we came to this land mostly with free wills and of our choice. However, we are reminded there are many among us, did not come freely, these people are the children that were brought over with their immigrant parents. Witnesses in the Mass shared their stories, one in particular,

she is Korean, born in Brazil and raised here. She had no idea that she was not American until she graduated from high school and was not able to find work because she does not have a social security card or work permit. America was all she knows. Another witness testified. He was of German decent and immigrated to this country from Yugoslavia after WWII. There was animosity against Germans here because of the war. He was grateful that he and his family, along with many other German families were welcomed by St Stephen's Parish and the Church of Los Angeles.

"We are all immigrants," remarked Jaime Huerta, Associated Director for the Office of Justice and Peace, "Regardless how we came to this country, we are all immigrants, whether documented or undocumented. Let's don't make a mistake thinking this is just a Latino issue." He continued, "There are many, many immigrants from many different parts of the world, among us, in our parishes". Are we not "our brother's keepers?" I often wonder. So why do some people in the Church say this is a political issue and that the Church should stay out of it! Remember, the Holy Family was immigrant. And they had trouble finding a place to stay. If it wasn't for the manger, where would our Blessed Mother give birth to the infant Jesus? We, as the Church, needs to be the conscious of our society. If we don't take a stand, and let the political leaders know that we have to find a solution to this issue with justice, fairness, and compassion. Let us be the manger for our brethrens. Auxiliary Bishop Alexander Salazar, Director of the Office of Justice and Peace said, "The parishes need to continue to support the immigrant in their new communities, regardless of their status".

After the Mass, some of our people commented, that they did not understand parts of the liturgy since some part was done in Spanish. I guess in this imperfect world of ours, there are no ideal solutions that can please everyone. I remember in one of my conversation with Bishop Salazar regarding this issue in one of our meetings. His response was, "When Jesus sent forth his apostles to preach in the many different parts of the world, they did not speak the language of the land where they went. The gift of tongues of the Holy Spirit must be at work! The people that were preached to were able to comprehend what was said to them." he continued, "Perhaps, we should pray a bit harder and open up and free our minds and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work on us." I imagine if we do pray hard enough and free ourselves of the distractions around us; hopefully the Holy Spirit can transmit to us the

message of what is said. We may not comprehend every word that was said, we should be able digest the essence what was said.

Celebration of Guadalupe

A major celebration for our Lady of Guadalupe was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The celebration started at three o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, August 5, 2012 with over 70,000 people gathered at the Los Angeles coliseum to pray the Living Rosary and listen to special talks regarding the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe. About 50 parishioners from St. Bridget attended this event. Raymond Woo,

Lilly Woo, Susie Tran and Venita Chu dressed in our Chinese native attire, played a role as part of the rosary beads in the Living Rosary along with other members of the Ethnic Ministry. Our parishioners along with other ethnic communities all dressed in everyone's native attires proudly showing their heritage, reflecting that all are the children of our Blessed Mother.

The event began with hundreds of the Matachines and Aztecas Dancers procession, dancing to the beat of the thunderous drums. The



Coliseum. The Living Rosary composed of the representatives from

Dominic



Honor Guard of the Knights of Columbus marched in the flags of different nations escorting in the Tilma Relic. The National Chaplain for olumbus, **Archbishop William Lori** placed the Tilma Relic on a shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe set up on the stage. He knelt, prayed and declared the opening of the celebration. Archbishop Jose Gomez welcomed everyone as the Living Rosary entered the

different ethnic communities and members representing the five different pastoral regions of the Archdiocese. The Rosary was prayed in English and Spanish. Each decade of the Rosary was started by one regional bishop. The Hail Mary was prayed by different representatives from the pastoral region and a seminarian finished the decade with the Glory Be. One of our own, Nicholas Lau was one of the seminarians chosen to recite one of the Glory Be, in Spanish!

Archbishop Gomez and Mr. Carl Anderson, the supreme Knights of Columbus delivered their speeches both emphasizing the importance of apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Star of the New Evangelization.

As we prepare ourselves for the Year of Faith, we are reminded “we are one, the God”. We are the evangelizer. The has chosen to commoner, as the one that people

Msgr. Sanchez, the rector of Institute studies and cause of St. Juan



children of new Blessed Mother appear to us, a indigenous people, can identify with. Eduardo Chavez cofounder and for Guadalupean postulator for the Diego expanded

the role of St. Juan Diego with Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is through Juan Diego, a commoner, a catechist at time that the Blessed Mother sent her message to Bishop Zumarrage with a miracle. The Virgin told Juan Diego to gather Castilian roses not native to Mexico on the usually barren hilltop so the Virgin arranged in his peasant Tilma cloak. When Juan Diego opened the cloak before Bishop Zumarraga on 12 December, the flowers fell to the floor, and in their place was the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, miraculously imprinted on the fabric.

The theatric reenactment of the apparition and musical performance by singers Danielle Rose and Dana Scallon San was interwoven throughout the program. Mexican Super Star, Pedro Fernandez brought the crowd to their feet in front of the stage as he performed to the screaming fans. After all the excitements, Archbishop Jose Gomez concluded the event with the procession of the Tilma Relic around the Coliseum giving blessing to all in attendance.

Yes, half of the event was conducted in Spanish. But definitely, one could comprehend what was said in Spanish if one with open mind

would listen with one's heart and not one's ears. Our Lady of Guadalupe, was declared by Blessed Pope John Paul II as the Patron Saint for all America. She is our Blessed Mother too, not just for the Hispanics. "We are one, the Children of God". Let us embrace our faith and appreciate other's cultures and heritage. We too, should be willingly sharing our faith through the interpretation of our cultures and heritage.

Outreach Ministry

Dominic

One of the goals in our parish's Mission Statement is to evangelize the Chinese in Los Angeles (推動羅省華人福傳). Among all the wonderful works done in serving and outreaching to the community, in this issue, we would like to highlight two programs implemented by Fr. John Lam and the Outreach Ministry some three years ago. One of the programs is the Basic English Class and the other is the Tai Chi class, both are offered as free of charge to the participant."

Basic English Class

It is our belief that learning and family relationships starts at home. When the new immigrants arrived in United States from China, Hong Kong or elsewhere, they are confronted with many challenges. Especially those coming from China, they are often getting a big dose of cultural shock. Language and employment are usually the primary issue,



compounded by communications with their children who are adopting and assimilating faster and better to their new environment. It is based on this belief that our Basic English Course is structured.

Unlike many other ESL programs elsewhere, our Basic English Course is structured to teach the students, the very fundamental language skills new immigrants need to survive in this, their new home land. The classes are taught in English only, encouraging the students not to be afraid in speaking and communicating in English. Not only do the students learn in the class environment, they frequently take their newly acquired language skills to practice in the actual locations. So far, they have gone out to shopping mall, fast food restaurant, sit down

restaurant, bus depot, train station, metro rail, supermarket (other than Chinese market). By taking them out, it expands their view of what their new home land can be outside of Chinatown. Other subjects areas taught are American culture, such as the different holidays. They are taught the reasons why these holidays are observed and the significance behind them. One year, they learned about Thanksgiving Day. The teachers and volunteers prepared a full traditional Thanksgiving meal for the students to try. Explanations were given as to the significance of certain foods eaten in certain holidays which allowed the students to become more fully assimilated and better understand what their children were learning in their schools.

We are grateful to all the numerous volunteers who come every Saturday morning from 10AM to noon to teach and work with these students. In particular, we should especially recognize the dedication and hard work of Jan Irwin and Phyllis Chiu, the primary instructors and formerly "the Principal", Thomas Chu (has since repatriated to Hong Kong) and currently Raymond Woo, who makes sure everything is in place for them. We are also very grateful the Phoenix Food Corp. for their generous financial supports in funding part of the program. Currently we have 30 plus students, from the Chinatown neighborhood, enrolled in the class. Some even invite their children to attend some of the classes and to go on outings together. As a result of this program, the students have reported they can now better understand what their children are learning. They are so proud to go out with their children and are able to communicate to certain level with non Chinese. Praise God!

Tai Chi Class

Under Master Sandi Li, Tai Chi Class was started with the assistance of Thomas Chu, Raymond Woo and Francis Yao in 2009. The class was meant to promote good health for the seniors (and not so senior) through Tai Chi. The students comprised of about twenty-five to thirty of our parishioners and our neighbors in Chinatown. They practice every Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:30AM to 11:00AM. Afterward, many of them go out to have lunch together. Through the time before and after practice of Tai Chi, and during the lunch sharing, it offers an opportunity for the students to get acquainted with each others, an opportunity to have a dialog, and an opportunity evangelize. Through these dialogs our parishioners become better friends with one and other, developing a lasting friendship. Through these dialogs, our non-Catholic neighbors get to know what our faith is about.

Recently some of these friends gathered together to bid Farwell to one their fellow student, Ken Yim and his wife who are moving to Texas to be with their children and grandchildren. Some of these students are of other faiths. Through these small time of sharing, they are provided with an opportunity to witness how we live our faith and dispel of the misconception of what is a Catholic.

Youth News

PAST EVENTS AND HIGHLIGHT

Daniel Choy

Lunch and Learn Video + Basketball Shooting Challenge

we had a good time watching the animated video of “Life



with Jesus” over a delicious pizza lunch on July 15th at the Don Bosco Youth Center. It was a 30-minutes short video

packed with the whole life of Jesus. Sure is a great way to learn about Jesus’ life in a quick and fun to watch video for youth. 12 youths plus adults enjoyed the lunch and the video.

After the video, we went down to the new basketball hoop in the patio. Wilson Ko and Richard Cheung organized a basketball shooting challenge. The challenge is to keep shooting the basket in 1 minute with the highest score. Participates can shoot from any position on the court, in 2 rounds of 1 minute shooting. Higher points were given for basket made from further away. There were 6 youngsters took the challenges. And the winner is Joseph Louie with 96 points! Mark Lau came in a close 2nd with 84 points. Congratulations! We also played some half-

court basketball games before and after the shooting challenges. Alvin and Bonnie Tsui helped with passing the ball during the shooting challenges; and their dad, Jason, brought in



twisting balloon that we all enjoyed playing after the game. It was a very fun day!

Water-Fun-Day

Many of us enjoyed the pizza lunch and video on

August 19th at the Youth Center. Then we all had a blast with the after lunch activity: water gun games in the grass area! What a way to enjoy the summer day in a fun and refreshing way!

Peter Duoc Le first profession

After a yearlong intensive discernment and preparation of the novitiate program at the formation house in Rosemead, Peter Duoc Le, known to many of us as Duoc, has made his first religious profession to live his life as a Salesian of Don Bosco on August 21, 2012. The beautiful and prayerful mass was celebrated at St. Dominic Savio Church in Bellflower. He will move to New Jersey to continue his formation of post novitiate and practical training. Congratulations and prayers to Duoc as he continues to prepare himself for the vocation to serve God and the youth! May the love of God continue to reach many youth through you!

Don Bosco Youth Center

The Youth Center is available to the parishioners to reserve. Interested parishioners need to contact the Parish Office for room reservation.

We also would like to open up the Youth Center on Sundays for youth to hangout and have fun. In order for the Youth Center to be open for the youth, however, we need adult supervision. If you are an adult and can be available on any Sunday to provide supervision to keep the Youth Center more

often, contact Daniel Choy or anyone on the Youth Ministry team!



Eagle Scouts: Merit Beyond the Badge

Peter Cheung

For the past 17 years since the beginning of the Boy Scouts Troop 168 at the St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church on April 1, 1995, with the dedicated teaching and coaching from many great adult leaders, it has nurtured a total of 28 Eagle Scouts, including 3 latest in year 2011 – 2012.

Thanks to the generous support from the pastor, parishioners, the Scout's parents and the various Scout leaders, the Troop will continue to prosper and nurture hopefully another 3 to 4 Eagles Scouts in year 2012 – 2013.

A major objective of Scouting is to help boys from age 11 – 18 to develop their character, good citizenship and physical fitness.

Here is a summary from an independent study examining the effects that being a Scout as a youth has on men's later life.

The study was funded by the John Templeton Foundation and conducted by Baylor University. The first report from the study was released by Baylor University during the 2012 Scouts National Annual Meeting, which focuses on the differences earning the Eagle Scout Award makes in the lives of men. This report provides us with empirical evidence that, when compared to men who were never in Scouting, the Eagle Scouts demonstrate:

- Greater lifelong connections to family, friends, and neighbors;
- A higher sense of responsibility to give back through leadership, service, volunteering, and donating;
- Greater connections to and concern for their community;
- More self-discipline to plan ahead and set and achieve goals;
- Higher self-expectations;
- A greater appreciation of and concern for the environment;

- Increased respect for religion and religious diversity.

This study is available in PDF format at
www.scouting.org/About/Research/EagleScouts.aspx

CHINESE MARTYR SAINTS

The Chinese Martyrs and the two martyred Salesians in China

Dominic

Of the one hundred twenty Chinese Martyrs canonized by late Blessed Pope John Paul II in 2000, eighty-seven were of Chinese ancestry; thirty-missionaries. six bishops; one religious sisters; seven seventy-six lay children, elders, catechumens. Of were diocesan religious orders Franciscan Friars; Étrangères de for Foreign of Don Bosco. three were foreign The martyrs consisted of twenty-three priests; brother; seven religious seminarians and people including men, women and two the thirty clerics, some and some were of of Dominican Friars; Jesuit Father; Missions Paris; Pontifical Institute Missions and Salesians The seven religious sisters were from the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.



In February 13, 1906, St. John Bosco's successor, Don Rua sent the first group of Salesians, Luigi Versigli, SDB and Calisto Caravario, SDB to China to do missionary work. Although missionary work was not the charism of the Salesian, it was the Salesian spirituality, wanting to help the youth and the marginalized that led them to China. There they established schools, orphanages, and youth centers. They were well loved and respected by the people. In 1921 Fr. Luigi Versigli was ordained Bishop of Xiujou.

It was on February 25, 1930, that Bishop Versigli was on his way to Linjiu, in a small junk, accompanied by Fr. Callisto Caravario and two other missionaries, two catechists, some teachers with some pupils. They thought travelling in a group would provide some safety.

Unfortunately, they encountered some pirates and was forced to anchor. The pirates demanded a considerable sum of money for their release. The pirates noticed two young girls and boarded the junk to try to take girls with them. The missionaries tried in vain to block the path

of the pirates. Both Bishop Versigli and Fr. Caravario tried to negotiate with the pirates with no success. In rage, the pirates struck the missionaries with their raffles and dragged all of them to shore. On shore, they continued to beat them. The pirates dragged the girls into the nearby forest, ten minutes later, guns were fired. There on the shore somewhere near Linjiu, they were all martyred defending the purity and chastity of the young.

Reflections

An Invitation by Our Lady of Medjugorje – Our Story

Peter Cheung

After attending many Annual Medjugorje Peace Conferences at UCI, in Irvine, I have been praying for a chance to visit Fatima, Lourdes, Guadalupe and Medjugorje.

I was fortunate to have a chance to visit Fatima several years ago but still longing to visit the other shrines. All three Fatima, Lourdes and Guadalupe have been approved as shrines, but the decision on Medjugorje may come later in the year from the Vatican.

We are by accident that Our Lady of Lourdes to visit month. It was taking the



Medjugorje and Lourdes was truly a life changing experience!

When Our Lady called us to go to Medjugorje and Lourdes, She gave us a VIP treatment as a loving mother would, from the day we left till we returned home for a whole month. It seemed every day was a miracle beyond our expectations with the people we met; places we visited; events and situations we encountered; nice weather even the local people were surprised; traveling with heavy luggage making connections on our own with flights, buses, taxis and trains; immigration and boarder control; careful with drinking water and food, a lot of walking, etc. During the whole time we could feel the blessing, energy and peace to enjoy our pilgrimage with the opportunity to

have been
shrines, but the
Medjugorje may
year from the

grateful it was not
we were called by
Medjugorje and
both shrines last
indeed a miracle
trip. Traveling to

celebrate the Eucharist almost every day, sometimes at noon and evening in Medjugorje. Would you believe it that we even had a wonderful and “painless” Confession outside the famous St. James Church in Medjugorje on one evening with a Dutch priest?

During the day, many Masses are being offered in different languages with English at 9:00 am on weekdays and at noon on Sundays. On Thursdays and Saturdays there is **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** and on Fridays **Veneration of the Cross** in the church.

The evening program in Medjugorje starts every evening at 6:00 pm with the rosary at the outdoor area. Confession in all different languages also begins every evening at the same time. There is a pause while praying the rosary at 6:40 pm, which is the time Our Lady appears to the visionaries. The apparitions are private and take place in the visionaries homes. But Our Lady has said that anything we bring to the church with us for evening rosary will be blessed with her Motherly blessing during this pause. At 7:00 pm the Mass is in Croatian and it is a different experience attending this beautiful Mass.

During the week when we were at Medjugorje, we had a chance to follow the same path up the **Apparition Hill** where the young visionaries first encountered Our Lady. We prayed at the status which commemorates the spot where Our Lady appeared to the visionaries. We also visited and pray at the **Blue Cross**, a very special place at the base of Apparition Hill.

We also had an opportunity to climb the **Cross Mountain**, where in 1933 the villagers built a 29' high cross on the anniversary of Jesus' crucifixion. The Cross contains what is believed to be a relic from the actual Cross of Christ given to the villagers by the Pope.

On one evening we were specially invited to one of the six visionaries, Ivan's home for his daily private apparition with Our Lady. It was a small room. We started praying the rosary at 6:00 pm and took a pause at 6:40 pm, which was the time Our Lady appeared to Ivan. We saw Ivan took on a conversation with someone, kneeling while holding his head high, but we could not hear what he was saying. After the private apparition with Our Lady, through an interpreter, Ivan told us Our Lady continued Her messages of Peace and Prayer. She gave each and everyone Her Motherly blessing, especially the religious orders and parents. She also blessed all the religious articles we put on the front table. Just to have that moment of grace and blessing was priceless and worth the whole pilgrimage to Medjugorje. There were many other moments of blessing as well.

After Medjugorje we went to visit Lourdes. Our story at Lourdes is to be continued.

My Spiritual Vocation Journey Fr. Michael Joseph Wu, O. Carm.

My vocation is in fact a mystery because God is a mystery. However for me, a Christian, this mystery has been revealed in Jesus Christ already. To become a Carmelite and I feel this is the best way for me to follow Jesus Christ. Somehow I know deep down in my heart that there cannot be any other ways more suitable, life giving, energizing, challenging, exciting and gratifying than being a Carmelite. This is the life that God has chosen for me, which is a graceful gift. This is also the life that I have chosen, as my response to God's calling.



I was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and I am the second child in my family. At home, I speak Mandarin. I also have several Chinese friends. I had a normal childhood, and was brought up in a loving and respectful family. My father was a businessman, and my mother was an elementary school teacher. Like many loving parents they firmly believed in God, and taught me to reverence God, and encouraged me to have "frequent conversation with God."

When I was 13, my family immigrated to Ecuador. A business associate of my father invited him to establish a company there. We lived in Guayaquil for eight years. It was a new experience for me since I had never lived in a foreign land before. Initially it was a challenge because I had to learn Spanish and a new culture in a new country. However, I enjoyed the experience and made some friends there. I attended two Roman Catholic schools there, first with the Salesians (Don Bosco), then with the LaSallians (the Christian Brothers). These schools taught me the faith and tradition of the Church. I still remember I had to learn the catechism of the Catholic Church, recite some prayers in front of the class, and pass final exams to graduate. During weekdays, I had to attend two classes of religion, make confession, and attend the

weekly Mass with my classmates. On Sundays I participated in the Holy Eucharist and met my classmates and their families afterward. My buddies and I often spent time with our teachers after school to engage in vivid discussions about philosophy, theology and other subjects. It was my favorite pastime. I learned a lot about the Church, the stories of the saints, other major religions of the world, Greek philosophies, logic and rhetoric... I had a very good experience from those gatherings, and wished that one day I could become as knowledgeable and passionate about life as my teachers were, especially their love of Jesus Christ. After finishing high school, I followed my brother's footsteps and came to the United States to pursue higher education. First, we lived together in Chinatown in Los Angeles for a while. Then, the rest of my family came to join us. While living there, I often visited Saint Peter's Italian Catholic Church and attended Mass there. It was a beautiful Church, adorned with many side chapels and statues of saints. I especially liked to stay with the Little Flower and to light a votive candle and pray and say the Rosary to Our Lady. I thought it would be an honor for me to join them on the spiritual quest of saving souls for God, to bring Christ's peace to the world. Father Rino Spada, who was the pastor there at that time, saw me regularly in the Church and came to chat with me. He invited me to join him for prayers before the evening Mass, and encouraged me to reflect on God's grace in my life. He asked me to read about the stories of the saints, and to learn from them the ways of walking with God. I read books about St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and St. Vincent de Paul... and pondered how I could best serve God in my life.

Then, my family moved to live in South Pasadena where I attended the Sunday Mass at the Holy Family Catholic Church for a few years. Every time the Sunday Mass was a lively and moving experience for me. It was filled with great homily and beautiful songs sung by some outstanding choirs and played by many talented musicians. The Church was often packed with young couples and families. People were very committed to the Church and actively exercising their faith. Many people participated in a variety of functions in the parish, and enjoyed each other's company. The parish had a vibrant parish life. Sometimes, my female friends at that time would join me for the Sunday Mass. I was pondering that maybe my vocation was to get married and get settled like many of my friends.

Afterward, my family decided to buy a house in Arcadia, California, so, we moved again. This time I attended Mass at the Sts.

Felicitas and Perpetua Catholic Church in San Marino. It was a diocesan parish and staffed by the OCD Carmelite sisters from Alhambra. A few OCD sisters were living in the nearby convent. They were in charge of the parish elementary school, and managed a large parish library as well. I often chatted with them while I was volunteering and helping in the parish library. Monsignor Lawrence J. Gibson, who was the pastor there at that time and the OCD sisters, encouraged me to explore my vocation in the Church, and to deepen my Catholic faith.

Faith has always been a very important aspect in my life. Ever since I was little, I have been attracted to the idea of having a deeper relationship with God, and living in a religious community. I still hold to the idea that being a religious priest is a very special privilege to serving God and God's people. Plus, I believe this is the best way for me to be closer to God and Jesus Christ. I think a religious person must strive for the total integration personally because being fully human and integral is the way to experience the divine. I know that the majority of people choose to get married, and some others choose the single life because different

people
receive
different
calling from
God. They
have
different
attractions
or interests.



But for me, I desire to be fully human and integral and to get closer to Jesus Christ by being a religious priest.

As I was pondering and discerning my vocation, I was able to visit several religious and diocesan communities in the archdiocese of Los Angeles. Although I had been attracted to some of them, yet, none really “clicked” with me except the Carmelites. The prophetic dimension of proclaiming the Word of God, while pondering and walking in God's presence with God's people, and to follow its contemplative tradition, really appealed to me deeply. I sensed its spirituality was well balanced. The Carmelite spirituality unites two dimensions of human reality: the interior (the soul) and the exterior (the body), the emotion and the thinking, the contemplation and the action, the aloneness in silence with God and the togetherness with God's people in conversation...

They complement each other. Its spirituality is like the East meeting the West, where the contemplative mysticism is joining with the active practicality of ministerial life.

By the grace of God, I was able to contact one of the vocation directors of the Carmelite Order and established a frequent communication with him. Fr. Kevin McBrien was very kind to me, and introduced me to two Carmelite parishes in Los Angeles (St. Jane Frances de Chantal Church in North Hollywood, and St. Raphael's Parish in South Central Los Angeles), and a Carmelite high school (Crespi High School in Encino). I was able to visit these places regularly and spend time with the communities. They made me feel welcomed and at home. After a year, by Fr. Kevin's encouragement, I decided to apply for my entrance into the Order, hoping one day to become a full-fledged Carmelite. The Order graciously accepted me and sent me to the pre-novitiate house in Houston at that time, to learn the Carmelite Rule and to experience the community life. After the pre-novitiate years, I was sent to the novitiate house in Middletown, N.Y. for the canonical year. It was the time for me to further deepen my understanding of the Carmelite charism and spirituality. My novitiate year ended very quickly like a flash. I learned about the Carmelite saints, the history of the Order, and the history of the province, the religious vows, and different types of prayer, self-care activities and many other things. Afterward, I went to St. John the Evangelist Church in Leonia, N.J. to minister to God's people and to spend my internship year there. I participated in different ministries: teaching CCD classes to the third and the fifth graders, collaborating with the Prayer Group, the Right to Life, and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. I joined the Knights of Columbus, visited the sick in two nearby hospitals, and brought the Holy Communion to the homebound, and walked with some people as their spiritual companion assisting them in their spiritual journey.

The internship year went by like a flash. I had many blessed and gratifying experiences there and tremendously enjoyed the parish life. However, I was still feeling unstable emotionally because I had a hard time letting go of the American Dream (having a nice home, a beautiful wife, a successful career...) and was not able to reconcile my expectations with the reality. Therefore, I requested the Order at the Vatican to grant me a dispensation and to allow me some time to ponder further my real vocation to find peace in my heart. The dispensation was granted. So, I came back to California and spent some

time with my family before moving up to live in Salinas, California to work for the USDA as a farm loan specialist.

I had a wonderful time living on my own, and my immediate supervisor, Mr. LaVon Treasure and his wife Mary treated me as their adopted son. My colleagues were all very supportive of me at work. I could not ask for more and felt very happy that my American Dream was slowly coming to fruition. However, I still felt God's calling me constantly to reconsider my vocation in the Church. In my restlessness I kept asking God the question: "Is this all that life can offer?" "Is this all?"

I made several good friends who were pastors of different parishes in the nearby cities. I saw how hard they were working with God's people day in and day out, and felt their great sense of contentment and peace in their hearts. I also felt the drastic need of good active priests in the Church. At the same time I saw the exploitation and great injustice committed against the poor migrant farmers who travelled so far away from their homeland seeking better living. I heard the cry of the migrant workers continuing so many years after the death of Cesar Chavez. These poor people's plight reminded me of my own family's immigration struggles that I wished I could do something for them. So, one evening I participated in the Holy Hour with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church, and I asked God to give me a sign if God wanted me to return to the Order, which God did. It was such a life transforming experience that I could not believe it. So, to reassure myself, I asked God again to give me another sign. To my great surprise, God responded again. I was utterly shocked. I shared this experience with my priestly friends. They were very happy for me and recommended me to speak with their vocation director and encouraged me to join the diocese of Monterey to become a diocesan priest. However, due to my previous Carmelite formation, I desired to return to the Order. I inquired with my former formators/mentors. They all supported my return, which was another clear sign of God's calling. To prepare myself of this life-changing event, I made a week of silent retreat with the Camaldolese monks in Big Sur. Again in my first night there I got another clear sign from God. With all these reassurances I returned to the Order and went to live in the Whitefriars Hall in Washington, DC, to start my four years of theology studies in the Master in Divinity program.

Four years went by so quickly. By the grace of God I got my MDiv degree this May and made my 30-day silent retreat in England to prepare myself for the solemn vows. By the grace of God, I made my

solemn vows in August. Immediately afterward the Order assigned me to assist and minister to God's people at St. Raphael's Parish in Los Angeles. With God's blessings and the Church's intercessions I was ordained a deacon by Bishop Edward M. Clark on the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux. With God's blessings I was ordained a Carmelite priest in April of 2012.

I hope to minister to God's people fully and to walk with them in God's presence, continuing to build the Kingdom of God in our midst. I hope by God's divine providence and grace, I can make a good impact to the world, drawing people to love Jesus Christ more and more.



The Salesian Family the Genius of Don Bosco

Fr. Chris Woerz, SDB

Don Bosco Listens to his Heart and a Friend

Don Bosco, an eager young newly ordained priest, was anxious to begin his ministry. He assumed that he would be a parish priest and began to entertain thoughts of finding a parish, perhaps one near his home near Castel Nuovo di Asti.⁸ He had enjoyed his time with Fr. Peter Cinzano parish church in Castelnuovo. Describing those five months of service at the parish, Don Bosco enumerates the many tasks for which he was responsible including preaching, teaching catechism, celebrating the Sacraments and office duties. He concludes: My delight was to make contact with the children and teach them catechism. They used to come from Murialdo to see me, and on my visits home they crowded round me. Whenever I left the presbytery there was a group of boys, and everywhere I went my little friends gave me a warm welcome.⁹ This, *my delight was to make contact with the children*, is the dominate theme that has run through his life as a child, student, seminarian and now as a young priest. Now he must find a position. Following the custom of the time he must find his own livelihood. The young priest sees three options before him: At the end of the holidays, I had three situations to choose from. I could have taken a post as tu-tor in the house of a Genoese gentleman with a salary of a thousand francs a year. The good people of Murialdo were so anxious to have me as their chaplain that they were prepared to dou-ble the salary paid to chaplains up to then.

Last, I could have become a curate in my native par-ish.¹⁰ Don Bosco, before making any choice, seeks the advice of his spiritual advisor, Fr. Joseph Cafasso. Don Cafasso advises the young priest to hold off making a decision as to ministry. Cafasso sees in Don Bosco something unique which would be stifled in a parish. Don Bosco is destined for a larger enter-prise. He invites Don Bosco to take the course in pastoral theology at the *Convitto Ecclesiastico* where he himself taught. This was a two year course in what today we would call pastoral theology. The time was spent in preparing young priests for the ministry. Don Bosco entered the *Convitto*, which was located in Turin, on November 3, 1841. A month later he met a 16 year old, Bartholomew Garelli, in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. Don Bosco tells the story in his *Memoirs*¹¹. This first young person returned with friends to seek out Don Bosco who happily gath-ered them in the Church and later at the *Convitto*. In the meantime he was preaching and visiting the prisons with Fr. Cafasso and attending classes. He referred to these gatherings as the *Oratory*. Soon the boys numbered about 30. Don Cafasso a teacher and Don Guala, a founder of the *Convitto* enjoyed the young people and often helped Don Bosco with them. Don Bosco's genius was forming. He clearly had an affinity for the young. His generosity attracted oth-ers to help him in this ministry. This will become an essential quality of his future Salesians: listen to your heart, be generous and others will come to help with the young.

⁸ The area has been renamed *Castel Nuovo di Don Bosco*.

⁹ Ibid: *Memoirs* pg. 97

¹⁰ Ibid: *Memoirs* pg. 99

¹¹ Ibid: *Memoirs* pg. 102-107

An Overview of Vitamin D.

William Kho

Vitamin D is one of the most important substances to an overall healthy body, but it is especially important when it comes to bone health as many of you may have already known. Did you know that Vitamin D must also be present to help prevent many other serious health problems. This article will take a brief look at what Vitamin D actually is, and how it helps keep our bones and body healthy.

What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a water-soluble vitamin that is found in some foods naturally such as tuna, sardines, and herring but is fortified in many dairy products. Additionally, Vitamin D is usually available through a

multivitamin or Vitamin D supplement. However, 80 to 90% of what the body gets actually comes from the sun. The body then synthesizes Vitamin D by converting it in the kidney into two active forms: Vitamin D2 and Vitamin D3.

Vitamin D and Calcium

How does Vitamin D and Calcium work together to keep our bones healthy? In order to understand how, it is important to realize the effect Calcium has on bone strength.

The bones in our bodies are made out of Calcium. In order for bones to grow they need continuous supplies of Calcium. As we grow older, our bones stop growing, and less Calcium is needed. However, problems arise from the depletion of the Calcium in the body. Low Calcium levels in the blood signs the depletion of calcium from the bones and lead to weak and brittle bones. Insufficient Calcium in the bones eventually progress to a condition called Osteoporosis, which is a disease that affects the elderly.

It's clear that Calcium plays a role in bone health, but how does Vitamin D fit in? Vitamin D is a regulator of both Phosphorus and Calcium absorption. Vitamin D must be present in adequate amounts to help the body adequately absorb Calcium. Without sufficient Vitamin D, the body is not able to absorb all of the Calcium that it needs. You can take so much calcium supplements but without the vehicle, the calcium will just pass out your body.

Other myths of Vitamin D.

Vitamin D is also used for conditions of the heart and blood vessels, including high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It is also used for diabetes, obesity, muscle weakness, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, bronchitis, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), and tooth and gum disease. Recent studies also found the link between vitamin D and certain cancer prevention. It is also important to aim the immune system to fight against cold.

Bottom Line.

For normal healthy individuals, daily 600IU of Vitamin D will be sufficient. This can be easily achieved by exposing the skin to the sun 3 time a week for about 15 minutes (depends on the skin color). You will be surprised that it only takes a six consecutive days sun exposure to

store to up 49 days sufficient vitamin D for your body. Consider adding dairy products into your diet.

For individuals who live in northern part of the globe or away from the equator, Vitamin D supplement is recommended.

For elderly, due to the decreasing in kidney function, poor absorption and lack of adequate sun exposure. Vitamin D supplement of 1000IU is generally recommended.

If you have any comments or question(s), any suggestion on any health topic, feel free to email me at ykho168@yahoo.com

The Lighter Side of Church



The \$20 and the \$1 Joke

Two well worn bills arrived at the Federal Reserve Bank to be retired - a twenty and a one. As they traveled down the conveyor belt, they struck up a conversation. The twenty reminisced about the interesting life he had, traveling all over the country. "I've been to the finest restaurants, Broadway shows, Las Vegas , Atlantic City ," he said. "I even want on a Caribbean cruise. Where have you been?"

"Oh," said the one dollar bill, "I've been to the Catholic church, the Methodist church, the Episcopal church, the Lutheran church."

"What's a church?" asked the twenty

