

Inter Nostrum

our journey

Cass alumni newsletter

march 2007

Issue #2

In this edition:

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First steps



WELCOME...!

Welcome to our second edition of Inter Nostrum – First Steps, a consequential topic to our previous theme Birth.

Every journey begins with a first step. However, it is not always easy to take that step. I personally know some ex-CASS friends who have not yet overcome the challenges of taking the first step into the Catholicism, being the RCIA program. I am also aware of ex-CASS friends who have forgotten their faith since exiting CASS.

This edition aims to explore these challenges, and revisit the power of RCIA in time for Easter.

We are also very proud to announce CASS' new intakes in 2007, and updates on CASS first events for the new year, being the inter-committee camp and Pray & Play.

If you happened to miss our first edition, you can access it through our website. Our last edition covered the inauguration of the alumni, reviews of CASS events and upcoming notices, thoughts on Christmas and an interview with Anson Wong.

We wish to take this chance and make correction to last issue's Inter Nostrum. At the 15th year anniversary CASS annual dinner, it was Father Dom who was singing with John Ting.

But for now, happy reading! (& have a great Easter too!)



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Word from the President

Dear Alumni Members,

Welcome back to the second issue of our quarterly Alumni newsletter. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our warm welcome to any of our new members who have just joined our Alumni family.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, Alumni has just gone through an important milestone since we officially established last year, which is our first reunion dinner organized for our members to have a chance to catch up with each other, and we are very pleased with the good response from our members and the fact that we are able to get-together with our members face to face and share our experiences after CASS and of our faith.

Last but not least, I would like to send my appreciation and gratitude to my committee members for their dedication to make our first reunion dinner happen and all other work in keeping our Alumni group going.

God Bless,
Patrick Chiu

Greetings from Sister Teresa

Dear CASS Alumni,

We welcome you to this second issue of the CASS Alumni E-newsletter! For those of you are here at the Reunion Dinner, I am glad that you have chosen to take the time out to participate in the first Reunion Dinner of the CASS Alumni.

As human beings, we all need friends and we make friends with people whom we meet on our life's journey. It may be interesting to note, though, that many people treasure the friends that they make during their school and university years more than any other.

"Why?" you may ask. I believe that largely, it is because they find this kind of friendship more sincere. In those times of our lives, things are simpler and people with compatible personalities and values become genuine friends without having to worry about the other having a hidden agenda. Also, friends from those times of our lives are amongst those who have seen us grow and develop into the people we are today. They are the ones with whom we have shared much of our discovery of life and people.

Later in our life, though we continue to meet many people in the workplace or in other situations in society, we become more cautious in surveying other people's characters before we stretch out our hands to them in friendship. Often we ask ourselves, "Is he or she a good person? Is there a reason this person wants to befriend me that I'm not aware of?" The youthful innocence in which we could extend ourselves in friendship is so easily marred.

In recent months, many ex-CASS members who have been working in the city have been invited by Clifford To and John Lai to gather for lunch or yum-cha from time to time. I remember Clifford suggesting to Patrick Chiu, the founder and the first president of CASS Alumni, to have this casual gathering. But Patrick on the other hand encouraged Clifford to organise it instead as it keeps things more informal. The number of ex-CASS members attending these gatherings grew and by early March, 18 people were coming to this lunch. Many who came found happy experiences rekindling old friendships and catching up with each other. Also, the saying goes that "A friend-of-my-friend is my friend" and as not all those attending knew each other, it was a good opportunity to make some new friends too.

Seeing the need to contact old friends, the CASS Alumni Committee has organised this reunion dinner, wanting to provide you with an opportunity to come together and have a happy time "catching up" with one another. We of course realise that as life goes on, some of us will have married and even had children so we encourage those of you who have been so blessed, to bring your family along so that we may "catch up" in those areas of your life and also share and rejoice in the joys you have found.

Life is like a river; it goes on and on and never stops. We hope that the friendships we have formed will never die as God is the centre of our life and Christ is the bond of our friendship.

May God Bless You and Your Family!



Love and Prayers,
Sister Teresa Chiu SM
Spiritual Director, CASS

Taking the first step.



Taking the First step... its has never been easy.

Having said that though, it appears to be harder for an adult to take a first step in something than it is for a child.

Children – they never shy away from taking their first steps. They topple, they fall, they might cry – but that has never stopped them from learning to walk. Such fearlessness – something adults lack.

We, adults, seem to have too much consideration for too many things. This consequently makes us shy away from taking the first step.

A couple of my friends, though they were CASS members, have found challenges in taking the first step – the RCIA program.

For example, one has had Catholic education since primary school and has always been surrounded by Catholic friends. He believes in God, but there is something that holds him back from taking the RCIA program. We cannot seem to identify what exactly it is, but there just seems to be many excuses every time the topic is raised.

Ironic as it may sound, but one of the reasons provided was that it's currently not the right time and his life is not yet stable enough to start something new.

The question is though, when is the right time?

Underneath, he knows that it really isn't about the circumstance, it really is a mental state. Accepting something new, especially faith, is a life changing event. There is a fear that once this happens, his world would topple upside down.

But whoever said the change would be something bad? As the finance lecturer says, the more risk you take, the higher return you will receive!

Unfortunately, we cannot rush adults into taking their first step. They will only rebel and reject. Trust and understanding, appear to be the only key to the first step.

I personally took a "first step" a month ago, and I felt the same fear, the same initial natural instinct to reject.

Despite having been baptised & "confirmed" Catholic, this year was the first time I've ever been to the Ash Wednesday Mass. Despite calling myself a Catholic, I had no idea what Ash Wednesday meant.

So a friend invited me to attend the mass during lunch time that day. That was fine, nothing new. (I was even proud of myself that I was attending Church on a weekday!)

Then, there was the ritual of ashes on foreheads.

This was new to me.

Having no idea what the ashes meant, I rejected it when the servers came towards me. In my mind all I was thinking was, "What is everyone thinking?! I don't want a mark on my forehead – I still have to head back to work!"

So I stood aside and watched as everybody else came forward. Even people in suits were getting it too. In my mind, all I was thinking of was what colleagues at work would think if I headed back with ashes on my forehead.

When the guy next to me, who also originally rejected the server, went forward for the blessing, I started to feel that maybe I should also have it too.

So I did...despite part of the reason being not wanting to be left out.

However, during communion, I started to feel bad, and I started to repent as I rejected God based on pure superficiality. I promised God and myself that I wouldn't do it again.

Despite that, at the end of church, I eagerly wiped off the ashes on my forehead as I stepped out, oblivious that "faithful Catholics would proudly wear the mark on their foreheads the whole day".

However, I'm now thinking to myself, would I be one of those faithful Catholics who will proudly wear it the whole day this time next year, despite weird glances and possible comments by colleagues?

The first step will be difficult, but the next year after that, I probably wouldn't even notice their questioning looks.

All I know is that proclaiming your faith is never easy. Nor do you achieve it alone.

And that is why, I personally think, CASS friendships are extremely powerful.

To have a very firm Catholic believer next to you to guide you all the way, and to bring you back to God is a necessity.

I actually have a couple of friends (all from CASS) who frequently ask me how my faith is going along. They help me keep in track and go to church. These friends keep me in touch with the faith and I thank them for it!

I hope the alumni will succeed in its aims. For people who have lost touch with God since graduating from uni and leaving CASS, may you find your guidance back to God through ex-CASS friends connected by this alumni.



Where are they now?

~ Joanna Leung

Having left CASS a couple of years ago to start her family, Joanna has returned, with great determination and enthusiasm to assist Sister Teresa in building another dream, the CASS alumni.

Having been in roles such as Central VP, and Central editor, Joanna was definitely a significant figure in the periods 2001-2003. As much as we have seen her around, though, how many of us really know much about her? Now married to Adrian Fong and mother to Isaac, she works full time in North Sydney.

Tell us about your biggest step in your life & significant events...

Isaac.

Isaac was born 3 weeks early and had to stay at the hospital's special care nursery during the first week. Because of his low birth weight at 2.1kgs, they had to monitor his body temperature and tube feed him milk formula through his nose. That's not all.

The cheeky little monkey did not open his mouth to cry out loud right after the 8 hours birth. In rushed two doctors and someone was using one of those handheld pumps to pump oxygen to him. Was I scared? Of course! I did not carry him 8 months or so to have anything happen to him! I did not know what to do as I was a bit dazed from sniffing too much gas to ease the contractions, so I just prayed. My lips must be moving, because a midwife came to me and asked if I was alright. At that point, I also regretted picking Isaac (Abraham's son) as his name. Would I really sacrifice him when asked to?

I struggled but in the end I sort of surrendered. I told God if this is how He wanted it to be, He can have Isaac. I was in my little world while midwives & doctors rushed around me. They put Isaac in my arms. His eyes still closed, his limbs limp, his little face was fully covered by a standard oxygen mask. He looked more like something from a science fiction than my son to me. He was quiet. It was all very surreal... I think I sniffed too much gas... then they took him away from me to put him into his little trolley. They unwrapped him and "WAAHHH!! ARH! ARH!" he cried. Everyone in the room smiled, while I felt like smacking his little bottom for putting me through all that. He's a cheeky little monkey from the beginning!

Any advice for others taking their first step in marriage?

Most couples living together for the first time will slowly discover each other's habits, mostly bad ones. Trivial they may be, they can be very annoying to the other half such as men keeping the toilet seat up, resulting in conflicts on little but often silly things. Gone may be the days of him satisfying your every need and want, little surprises, sweet talking, and her being the little loving sweet heart. After all, the more time you spend together under the one roof, the more fractions occur. But do not despair! "Perfect match" is rare and both sides need to compromise and in time you will become The Perfect Match.

You alone cannot change the other half. Pray. Not just once but keep on asking until you get an answer from God. God will guide us on the right path, even though sometimes it may not be how you want it to be.

When you disagree with your other half, pause, take a deep breath and think why you disagree. If you do not have any reason to support your view, stay calm, do not talk back meaninglessly. Pray for God's guidance. It may really be you who's in the wrong! The other half should also reflect on what was discussed and keep his/her peace. Pray.

No longer are you living with just your own family. It's not me, myself and I. It's now "us". (And your extended family have just multiplied multi-fold. Sigh.) See it their way if possible. You are no longer planning your own future, but planning for "our" future. It's not just one way thinking anymore. Your spouse has the right to input.

Sit down and write down all your needs and wants as detailed as possible separately. Then come together, compare and discuss. Try to put the two lists together, peacefully! You now have your combined goals to achieve together! Put it somewhere prominent in your household but out of the eyes of visitors. Mark them off as you achieved it. It's sort of like your shopping list. Have fun! :)

In times of trouble, pray.
In times of happiness, thank.

And in case you are wondering, no, we are still working on some of the above mentioned. :P

Joanna

~Julie Leung~

Wife to Raymond and mother of Abigail
cousin sister to Joanna Leung



Captioned: Abigail

It only take 9 seconds to form a first impression. It is this first impression that lasts a long time.

The first time I met Julie was at an alumni committee meeting, and she represented United Hearts of HK. My first impression? A very outgoing, friendly and decisive person. Someone who speaks their mind and really good at articulating. But really, besides that, I really didn't know her. So this was my chance to get to know her better.

A little bit about her

Julie joined CASS over 10 years ago(!) in 1st/2nd year of her Science degree at Sydney Uni. In around her final year of her degree, she assumed the role of CASS President of USyd. (Fun fact: she apparently won the role over Stephen Leung by just one vote!)

Since working in HK and consequently leaving after 6 years, Julie is now a full time devoted mum of Abigail (17 months), living in Hunters Hill and loving her motherhood role.

Biggest steps in life

The first things that Julie said was getting married & giving birth. For a wife and mother, this isn't very surprising. => Having asked her for something else, she said that her immigration with her family was a big step.

Having migrated to Australia for senior high, due to the culture shock and language barrier, she was thankful that she already had cousins who have migrated here before her family. They provided her the support & friendships to help her survive the high school years.

Now

Julie's life right now? Abigail, Abigail, and probably more Abigail!

Being a full time mum, she is so busy with everything that she hasn't had time to really have a break. When I asked whether she gets bored (since everyday is the same) she told me that being a mother, there really isn't much time to get bored!

Eventually though, she would like to get back into the society, whether it be work, or taking up hobbies. But now, its about bringing her daughter up and also in the spirit of God. Even though Abigail doesn't understand much now, Julie is reading the Children's Catholic Bible to her every night and is occasionally bringing her to Church as well.

Her thoughts about what she wants Abigail to do in the future? She replied: "Doesn't really matter. Just want her to be healthy and happy." [Just a perfect answer, really. But oh so genuine...]

My interview with Julie was wonderful. It hopped all over the place (her childhood, her family, her connection with UH, her time in HK, teaching from her parents, and to her child, possibilities of siblings etc). Julie was such a pleasant and easy person to talk to. It could be her sociable, talkative nature, but the interview was so comfortable.

We spoke for about an hour... the above material really looks like it covered maybe 10 minutes? It was. So why did I write so little? I was cautious not to delve too much into Julie's personal life and thoughts, as she's asked me to withhold some material, as she wasn't that comfortable having this published and available to the world.

My thoughts? I had a great time talking to her. So I couldn't publish it here, but I say you talk to her! She is very open and will readily share her thoughts and experiences... just not over the newsletter!

Easter - April 8th

Easter is a time for holidays, festivals and a time for giving chocolate eggs!!

Easter is also the oldest Christian festival, the celebration of death and coming to life again of Jesus Christ. The dawn of Easter Sunday brings with it the message of New Life. Herer is a prayer adapted from the Book of Common Prayer for Easter

O God, who for our redemption gave your only begotten Son to death on the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection has delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant that we who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit. Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection, empowered and transformed by your grace in and among us.

O Lord, so stir up in your church, indeed in each of us, that Spirit of adoption and reconciliation that is made possible by your grace revealed in Jesus the Christ, that we being renewed in both body and mind, may worship and serve you in sincerity and truth. We pray this in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Easter is typically a time where RCIA takes place so to bring new people into the family of God to start a new life. Phylli Tang, ex-CASS member of UNSW, here shares her thoughts and feelings on her decision to participate in the RCIA program and her journey so far. (Phylli is now in HK working in IT area.)

As some of you might know, I wanted to be a Catholic well before I came to Sydney (where I was baptised). This is because of my very good friend, who is a born Catholic and is quite influential on me, especially when I was younger. If you are wondering why I became Catholic, it is simple. I truly believed that my friend has been well looked after by God and that I wanted so much to be like her. A very typical girly thinking~ HA!

Then I came to Sydney for my tertiary education. One day, when we were having lectures, I spotted a beautiful Rosary in one of my Classmate's pencil case, and this was when I initiated a chat with her. After she realised that I wanted to be a Catholic, she introduced me to Sister Stella whom she knows from HK and at that time, Sister was having her mission in Sydney. That's how I started my RCIA.

Now when I look back, going to Sydney seems to be one of my greatest blessings of my life. Not only did I get my first degree and first job in life etc but I am now also a Catholic! Words cannot seem to explain how things just happened at the right time and right place, and I can only accept this as my blessing with a thankful heart.

If you ask me how being a Catholic has changed me, I basically am the same person! Haha~ sorry to disappoint anyone who is expecting a dramatic answer, but things just didn't happen that way for me.

However, I do find a subtle difference, which is the peace that I've never felt when I said my prayers at Church before I was converted. RCIA did teach me a lot more about Jesus and his life. All those stories that I was told and the meanings behind them just make me understand what I was getting myself into. Undoubtedly, this is an endless journey which I am still learning. Having the right guidance from the Church and its people are essential in this journey that no one should miss.

Due to my job nature, I travel frequently around the Asia Pacific region. I remember when I was in Taipei last Dec, I could not locate a Catholic Church for me to pray, and I ended up doing that in a Christian (or Protestant) Church. (Taiwan is quite a Christian dominated country.) Being in a Christian Church reminds me how it is always the connection between God and myself that matters, and I will always try to keep my doors open to God no matter where I am!

Phylli

Community updates: Reflections

CASS O'Week: O'Week has just become even harder for CASS.

As you may be aware, university unions used to charge all students a union fee. This has now been replaced by the voluntary student union (VSU). The VSU policy differs between the universities and is as follows:

USYD: if members want to join any club, they must first pay \$99 access fee.

UTS: each member is charged \$10 by the union to each club/society they join

UNSW: the union has decided not to charge fees this year

UMACQ: similar to UNSW.

Effect on CASS...

Due to the high cost of the indirect union fees for USYD and UTS students, these CASS branches have not been able to collect the standard \$3 membership fee. This not only means the loss of membership income for the branches (their only source of income for the year), but the high cost has also deferred people from joining CASS.

Despite these adverse circumstances, all committee members were motivated as ever, achieving excellent results.

The total CASS members for 2007 is approximately 200-250, with reports of increasing regulars in weekly bible sharings!

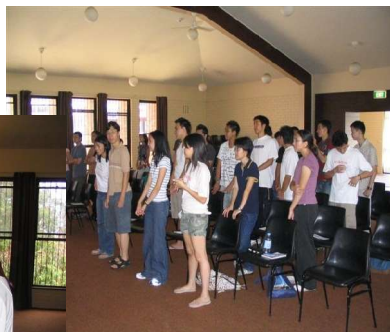
CASS ICC: Bringing the Committee to the realisation of the importance of ministry

Held at the Cheveliar Centre at Kensington, the ICC brought together all committee members with an aim to encourage each to deepen their relationship with God, and to provide some practical tips on serving such as what to do at O'Week and how to organise a mass & rosary and their significance.

Fr Joseph Lu from the Chinese Community came to celebrate Saturday Mass with the committees, followed by sacrament of reconciliation, followed by Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Rosary Church.

Highlights of the ICC include:

- Adoration - a time spent quietly with the Lord
- Affirmation - the time the committee got to know each other really well, and bonded as a team



Pray & Play 2007

Held on the 17 March 2007, Pray & Play (more affectionately known as P&P) is an annual event by CASS. This year was located in the familiar headquarters of Sister Teresa's accommodation complex at Woolwich.

The day started off with Praise and Worship from the CASS music team followed by two testimonies, one by Andrew Chu, and the other by Geraldine Chong. The day coincided with the feast day of St Patrick, and this was a main part of the homily given by Fr Nguyen. After the mass, the members broke into university groups and discussed questions related to the 2007 CASS spiritual theme: "Go Forth in the Spirit of Truth and Love".

The drizzling weather did not dampen the mood, and the "play" section of the day took place in the hall, after a delectable meal at the park.



2008 WYD – our participation

ASIAN YOUTH FESTIVAL

Held on 3rd February 2007, the Asian Youth Festival witnessed unity of Catholicism, as it was jointly organised by 6 Chinese communities across Sydney (the first in 10-11 years!), with an aim to prepare for the WYD in 2008.



The night was pumping with a wonderful array of songs, dances, skits, testimonies, reconciliation, adoration and catechesis by Bishop Porteous.

CGC: New leader, new team, new vision

Hi all,

As you all may or may not know CGC had its Annual General Meeting (AGM) last week on Sat 20th January to elect the new committee that will SERVE for 2007. It was a great turn out and the competition was tough but friendly. After all the votes had been counted, hearing my name called out for the role of President was unexpected and a surprise. Im sure the rest of the committee would feel this somewhat.

Let me introduce the 2007 CGC Committee:

President: Eddie Hung

Vice President: Angela Chan

Treasurer: Revsion Tam

Secretary: Katrina Yip

SCD Co-ordinator: John Lai

Rosary Co-ordinator: Abraham Lam

Activities Co-ordinator: Adeline Tan

And this committee could not be anything without those who have chosen to also lift their cross to HELP CGC through 2007: Anson Wong, Andrew Tham, Pandora Hui, Thomas Kiang, Joanna Tsang, Henry Leung, Jennifer Mak, Olivia Choi, Sonia Cuan, Sandra Lan, Cecilia Lee... and we hope more will come to help to serve CGC in honour and glory of Him.

Thank you to both the CGC Committee and CGC Helpers for picking up your cross and following Him. I know that its a tough decision and a sacrifice and will require a lot of your time. But who is the one that gives us time?

Our VISION for this year can be summed up in FOUR words: Evangelise, Activate, Unity and Prayer.

- We will strive to be a channel in bringing more people to Christ.
- We will work on being more active in this ministry.
- We will aim to bring unity within this group and within the CCPC community.
- And most importantly, we will have a more prayerful year!!!

2007 will be an awesome and active year !!! We hope you can be a part of this!

See you all soon and have a great long weekend!

Peace of Christ

Ed

PS: REMINDER: CGC Rosary on 5th February 8pm start.



Special thanks for this edition:

Joanna & Julie – for their wonderful dedication in accepting the interviews

John Ting - for the provision of information and photos

Will Chan - P&P and photos

Cecilia Lee - ICC

Phylli Tang & Gabriel Cheung - Power of RCIA

Eddie Hung - CGC update & vision

Anthony Law - UH + photos

CASS Alumni connection in Hong Kong ~ United Hearts Community ~



Origin of The United Hearts Community

The United Hearts Community ('UH') is a Catholic prayer group named after the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was formed in Hong Kong on 1 March 1997 by a group of young people who had returned to Hong Kong after completing their tertiary education in Sydney, Australia.

At present, the participants in UH include ex-CASS members and non-CASS members and companions. The language used in UH gatherings is in Cantonese.

Missions of UH

- (15) To mould our members to have a close relationship with God on a concrete basis by virtue of having a strong prayer life and to have religious advancement
- (16) To promote the meaning of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary
- (17) To help our members and others in need with our intercessory prayers and the Rosary

UH Regular Activities

- Praise and worship
- Teaching and sharing
- Intercessory prayer and Rosary
- Prayer over for members in need after regular meetings
- Masses, retreats and social gatherings will be held on a regular basis



Captioned: 10th year anniversary of UH

UH Sydney contact

Julie Leung at jtleunghk@yahoo.com.hk

UH Hong Kong contact

Havana Siu (Chairperson) at havanasiu@yahoo.co.hk
Anthony Law (Core member) at anthonymwlaw@yahoo.com.hk



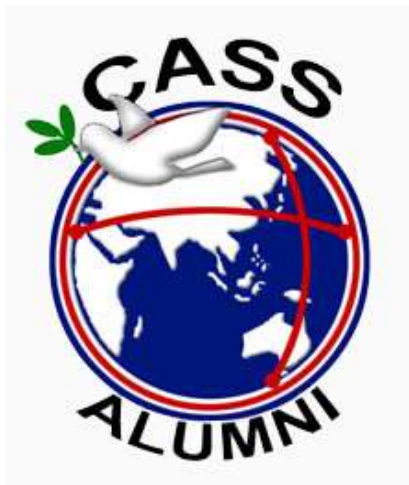
Alumni website Update

Come & Visit!

<http://www.alumni.cass.asn.au>

We now have the following features added to our website.

- 18. New section displaying our newsletter so members can now view it online
- 20. New section displaying of our special content, eg, interviews not incorporated in newsletters
- 22. Member area listing all of our currently registered members, grouped by uni branches



Alumni contacts

PR contact: oilyliver@hotmail.com

Contact us: alumni@cass.asn.au

Working around Wynyard or Town Hall in Sydney CBD, and wish to join us for our periodical informal lunches? Contact Karen via email: karen_poon@pkf.com.au