The Cathedral Magazine - Winter Edition 2023

Meeting Jesus Again for the **First Time**

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL HONG KONG Diocese of HK Island Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui 香 港 聖 公 會 聖 約 翰 座 堂

In Touch **ISSUE 036**

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Dean's Message

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ.

The autumn breeze is reminding us of the quick changes of climate and seasons during the year. A bit of coolness is confirming the arrival of the harvest days as well as the months of shorter daylight hours. At such a period of comfort and chill, we are slowly approaching the busy Advent and Christmas season in our Cathedral community.

Before that, we experienced the re-launching of the Stewardship Campaign at St John's Cathedral. This time, we printed a Booklet for Stewardship Campaign 各位主內弟兄姊妹: 2023 and distributed them to our parishioners two weeks before Stewardship Sunday on 29th October. Sermons 颯爽的秋風提醒着我們季節的迅速變更;絲絲的涼意更告 on the theme of 'Being a steward of God' were preached on 15th and 29th October. We are faithful to God and 示着秋收及日照縮短的日子,已在不經不覺間來臨。在涼 confident to our parishioners that we will be able to rise 快的時日中,座堂的每一位也慢慢步入忙碌的將臨期和聖 again from the difficult financial situations of 2022. 誕節期。

This year marks the 180th Anniversary of the Foundation 在此之前,我們重新啟動了座堂管家計劃,並印製一本小 of Sheng Kung Hui in Hong Kong as well as the 25th Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Province of Hong 冊子,於十月二十九日管家主日前兩周開始派發。另外, Kong Sheng Kung Hui. As the oldest Anglican church 在十月十五日及二十九日的講道中又安排了有關「作上帝 in Hong Kong, we participated actively in the various 管家」的分享。我們信靠上帝,也相信在教友的支持下, celebratory events, including the Thanksgiving Service at 我們能克服去年出現的財政困難。 Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the Thanksgiving Dinner at the Ocean Park Marriot Hotel, and the One + Run Provincial Sports Carnival at Hong Kong Science Park. Taking 今年是香港聖公會開基 180 周年暨教省成立 25 周年紀念, part in all these activities provides us with a perfect 作為香港歷史最悠久的聖公會教堂,我們積極地參與各項 opportunity to connect with all the sisters and brothers 慶祝活動,包括在伊利沙伯體育館舉行的感恩崇拜、假香 in Christ from other parishes and dioceses. We will really 港海洋公園萬豪酒店舉行的感恩晚宴,及在香港科學園舉 live out the theme of the entire anniversary celebration: One Family in Christ, Our Rock. 行的 One + Run 教省康體嘉年華。透過這些活動,我們可 與其他教區的弟兄姊妹建立聯繫,實實在在地活出整個慶 We are coming to an end of this year very soon, and it is

典的主題:「主乃磐石 · 教會為家」。 about time to have a bit of review on how much we have accomplished our goals set at the beginning of 2023. 年終將至,是時候讓我們回顧一下在年初定下的目標,到 Our annual theme of the Cathedral this year is 'Lighten Our Darkness', and we prayed earnestly for the light of 底完成了多少。2023 年座堂將教會主題定為 「光照我們的 God to shine upon us. Although wars between Russia 黑暗」(Lighten Our Darkness), 並懇切祈求上帝以恩光照 and Ukraine, and between Israel and Palestine, are still 亮我們。縱使俄烏戰爭和以巴衝突仍然持續,我們為着恩 continuing, we are grateful to merciful God for guiding us 慈的上帝在今年種種難關中的帶領獻上感恩。願上帝賜我 through this year of struggles and disruptions. May the peace of God be granted unto us and give us strength to 們平安,以及面對來年各樣挑戰與考驗的能力。 face the upcoming year of challenges and troubles.

Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' (John 14.27)

May God bless all of us with a peace-filled year of 2024.

Love to you all, Dean KK



主耶穌說:「我留下平安給你們,我把我的平安賜給你們。 我所賜給你們的,不像世人所賜的。你們心裏不要憂愁, 也不要膽怯。」(約翰福音 14 章 27 節)

願上帝賜我們滿有平安的 2024 年!

座堂主任牧師 陳國強謹啟

Meeting Jesus again for the first time 'Who is Jesus to you?'

This is a question we sometimes hear during spiritual exercises on retreats, or Bible study sessions. It's also a question that's asked during the Faith Begins class when we discuss the life of Jesus.

And it's an important question, even if it may seem at first to be an obvious one. Of course we know who Jesus is. right? The son of God incarnate, the Saviour of the World who died on the cross for our sins, born of a virgin, did lots of miracles, etc.

But that's not the question being asked. The question isn't 'Who is Jesus?' It's 'Who is Jesus to you?'

A key reason to pose the question this way is that it emphasises the idea that as Christians, ideally we don't simply believe in Jesus - we have a relationship with him. That relationship is shaped in large part by who we perceive Jesus to be and what role he plays in our life. Also, people tend to perceive Jesus in different ways, depending on their personal life experience and the sociopolitical and cultural contexts in which they're immersed at the time. Perhaps the simplest example is this: the way we think about Jesus when we're kids is typically a lot different from when we're grown-ups (though I have met quite a few exceptions to this rule).

This is a key theme in Marcus J. Borg's 1994 book *Meeting* Jesus Again For The First Time, which I recently had the pleasure of reading. Borg was an academic scholar who studied and wrote about Jesus from a historical and secular point of view – and yet he was also a Christian

who found that his faith was strengthened by seeing Jesus and the Gospels through the lens of history.

Meeting Jesus Again For The First Time aims to connect the historical (which is to say human) Jesus with the 'Christ of faith' - which is to say, those Christian traditions that proclaim Jesus as the Son of God who died to save our sins and rose from the dead. Borg defines these two aspects as the 'pre-Easter Jesus' and 'post-Easter Jesus', which he says better encapsulates not only Christian beliefs and thoughts about Jesus, but their experience with him as a spiritual reality rather than a physical one.

The historical Jesus

As Borg points out, historically speaking, the Gospels are not transcripts or journalistic accounts - they're a collection of narratives and traditions of the early Christian movement shared over the decades until they were finally written down in the late 1st Century, decades after Jesus died. From there, when one reads the Gospels from a purely historical point of view (which requires determining historical fact from Christian beliefs and traditions), we are able to look past the creeds and dogmas we've grown up with and see Jesus as a human who was compelled to give up his trade as a carpenter to wander the land telling people about the Kingdom of God.

Through historical analysis of the synoptic gospels of Which is why, for Borg, the most important element Matthew, Luke and Mark, Borg sees the historical Jesus as about living the Christian life isn't believing in Jesus or someone who didn't speak of himself as the Son of God or being good - it's establishing a relationship with God, instruct his followers to believe in Him specifically. Rather, who is not in Heaven far away but here with us through Jesus. Indeed, this is the essence of discipleship - to Borg writes, 'he was a spirit person [i.e. someone deeply in touch with the spirit of God], subversive sage, social take a transformative journey with Christ from exile to prophet and movement founder who invited his followers return, embracing the love of God to transform society and hearers into a transforming relationship with the same into a compassionate, inclusive and just one. Spirit he himself knew, and into a community whose social vision was shaped by the core value of compassion.'

In essence, Jesus' spiritual connection with God was Admittedly, this is a drastic oversimplification of a complex foundational to his entire ministry, and the dominant book, so there are other aspects I don't have room to quality of the Spirit was compassion. This was a radical include here. But for me, Meeting Jesus Again For The idea to preach in 1st-century Israel, in which society was First Time adds a new dimension to the human side of based on a system of purity, which resulted in sharp Jesus, which I've always found more interesting, and more social boundaries that excluded people who were not holy relatable, than the divine side. It also brings the Gospels enough of worthy enough. Where the purity system was to life and gives me a greater appreciation of his Ministry, exclusive. Jesus' message of compassion was inclusive. message and sacrifice for our sake.

The three macro-stories that shaped Jesus' ministry

Borg also places this in the context of three macrowho he was, what he was there to do, and how and when stories from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus he knew it. Did God tell him everything in advance? Did he grew up with as a devout Jew and referenced in his direct Jesus as he went along? teachings over and over. The first two are historical narratives: (1) Exodus ('a story of bondage, liberation, Borg shows one possibility - Jesus was a man so deeply a journey, and a destination') and (2) Exile and Return connected to the Spirit of God that he saw the injustices of ('religious life as a journey to the place where God is the present, how it conflicted with the nature of the Spirit present, a homecoming, a journey of return'). The third (love and compassion) and was driven by his spiritual macro-story is the 'priestly narrative' - which is not experience to tell everyone what was wrong and the about history, but rather the institution of the temple. solution that God desired. priesthood and sacrifice. That story is focused on sin, So, to come back to the opening question: 'Who is Jesus guilt, sacrifice, and forgiveness, and is the basis for the to you?' purity system that Jesus criticised.

According to Borg, Jesus embraced the historical helps me to articulate part of it: narratives of Exodus and Exile/Return as crucial to understanding the predicament of the present human To me, Jesus is someone who deeply loved and cared condition, and the solution that God offers us. So does about people, shared their pain, and took action to not the priestly narrative, but it's only part of the story. only help them, but to challenge and change the systemic When that story dominates the narrative at the expense injustices at the root of their pain and suffering (a very of the other two, it distorts our understanding of how dangerous thing to do, then and now). He invites me - and God wants us to live. Jesus sought to expand our view indeed all of us - to do the same, and promises that no so we could better understand how to achieve his matter how difficult things get or how discouraged I may compassionate society – not just in his time, but in the feel, he will walk with me every step of the way. ages to come.

This in turn is why so much of Jesus's message - and the Bible as a whole - still resonates with us today. For all the progress human society has made, the human condition is still in the same basic dilemma today as it was thousands of years ago. And the solution proposed by Jesus is still the one that's most likely to work provided we open ourselves up to the same spiritual connection with God that Jesus had.

Jesus and the Spirit

There's very little information on his life before he began his ministry, and as a layperson I have often struggled to understand just how much Jesus was aware of exactly

Well, for me, the answer is complicated, but Borg's book

So ... who is Jesus to you?

The answer may not be in Borg's writings - it may well be elsewhere. But I invite you to take time to reflect on the question in your own way. And perhaps you too will have the pleasure of meeting Jesus again for the first time.



Pilgrimage to Nagasaki

With modest expectations, I joined a group of 20 pilgrims from St John's on a journey to Nagasaki on 29th October 2023. This sevenday trip was the first pilgrimage organised by the Cathedral since the pandemic. Personally, I must admit the first challenge of the journey for me was definitely the early flight that I boarded in the morning with baggy eyes. But I take great pleasure in sharing my personal experience with the hope that the blessings which our Lord bestowed on us pilgrims may also be granted to everyone in our Cathedral family.

Before the journey, we were told that on this visit to Nagasaki we would learn about the history of Christianity in Japan, following the story of the Jesuit Mission in the 16th century, through the time of persecution and martyrdom, and the generations of Hidden Christians, to the end of their persecution in the 19th century, and up to the present. For a better understanding of the background, we were advised to read the novel Silence by Shūsaku Endō and/or watch the movie of the same name directed by Martin Scorsese. So, my mind had already been stirred after viewing the movie, and I traveled to Nagasaki expecting some hints on the questions and thoughts the film raised.



Church, where we learned more of St Francis Xavier, a Jesuit priest who brought Catholicism to Japan.

Due to the ban on Christianity throughout the country, believers could only maintain their faith in secret, becoming 'Hidden Christians'. A less-than-an-hour ferry took us to Kuroshima Island, one of the islands where Hidden Christians resided. We visited the Kuroshima Church, there's a monument to the Resurgence of Christianity in the 19th century.





The Revd Amos Poon giving a talk at the site of the Bastian Residence (Bastian was a Japanese priest who worked in secret, moving between hiding places until he was finally arrested and martyred).





We learnt more about Shūsaku Endō, author of Silence, and his work in the museum and enjoyed a beautiful sunset nearby.



Photo of all 20 pilgrims taken at Hirado Castle, the first visit of our journey. Hirado was the place where Christianity was introduced to Japan in 1549. We began our journey there to reflect on the role of the story played by the daimyos, the lords who ruled large areas of Japan at that time.

The Site of the Martyrdom of the 26 Saints of Japan in Nagasaki is a painful landmark in the history of Christianity in the country. An escorted tour in the museum brought to mind the searching questions raised by persecution for one's faith.



Towards the end of the pilgrimage, we visited Nyokodo, the home of Dr Nagai Takashi. Dr Nagai was a Catholic doctor who, though badly injured by the A-bomb, worked to relieve the suffering of others. The name of the place was taken after the Christian teaching of 'love others as you love yourself'.



As the Revd Will Newman puts it, 'It will also be for us a pilgrimage, a spiritual journey that raises questions about faith, both challenging and hopefully inspiring us in our own faith. The story of Christianity in Japan is not only the story of Silence, it is also a story of courage and hope, a story of faith kept alive, not destroyed, and a story of resurrection.' I feel thankful for my lessons gained from this journey and I believe my fellow pilgrims have benefited from it too.

Evelyn Chan Difference Strain Strai

Reflections on Shūsaku Endō: suffering, silences and the sea

The pilgrimage to Nagasaki reflected on Silence, the 2016 film by Martin Scorsese that was based on the 1966 novel by Shūsaku Endo. During the pilgrimage, Father Amos Poon gave three talks focusing on several recurring themes found in Silence, as well as in Endo's other writings: suffering, silences and the symbolism of the sea.

John Tanner

Talk 1. The meaning of suffering

Silence (both the book and the film adaptation) shed light on the existence of 'Hidden Christians' and the suffering they endure.

During the 16th Century, the Tokugawa Shogunate banned Christianity in Japan. This resulted in widespread persecution of Christians and the systematic eradication of the faith throughout the country. Some Christians were subjected to torture and execution. Others were forced to conceal their true identity and became known as 'Hidden Christians'. On the island of Kuroshima, the villages stand as proof of the Hidden Christians' strength and determination to protect their Christian beliefs despite facing persecution.

Indeed, one significant trait among early Christians was their readiness to endure suffering even in dangerous circumstances. Yet even the most devout find themselves asking in their anguish, 'Where are you, God? Why do we suffer, even though we believe in you?'

Even Jesus asked this question on the cross: 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'

Endō explored this theme in several of his works, including Silence. The protagonist - a Jesuit priest named Father Rodrigues - faces tremendous challenges, and is forced to renounce his Christian faith. At the end of the story, Father Rodrigues says to God: 'God, I hate that you are always silent.'

And the Lord answers him: 'I was not silent. I suffered beside you.'

The very question 'Where are you, God?' reflects our deep human longing for understanding, our search for purpose in the midst of adversity. In John 9.1-3, Jesus assures us that there is a purpose in it all (even if we don't understand it) when he explains that a man born blind is not being punished for sin; he is blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. Jesus shifts the focus from why we must suffer to the deeper meaning and purpose of suffering.

Moreover, Jesus assures us - as he did Father Rodrigues - that we are not alone when we suffer. This is important, because nothing is more devoid of hope than the sense that one is suffering all alone. Our suffering is always linked to the suffering of others. When we go through suffering, we can understand and empathise with others who suffer.

This is exactly what Jesus did. He didn't avoid suffering - he chose to go through such times himself, so that he can identify with us in our darkest moments and suffer alongside us.

When we face difficult situations, we should remember that the Lord is with us, sharing in our suffering, as he himself endured great suffering on the cross.

Talk 2. Silences

Ironically, Silence was not Endo's original title for the novel - it was suggested by the publisher. It was a good suggestion, as silence is a recurring theme throughout the story, on multiple levels.

The most obvious example is the silence of God. Father Rodrigues spends his entire journey seeking to hear God's voice. As he witnesses the torture and martyrdom of fellow Christians, he grapples with the seeming absence of divine intervention. He wonders why God does not intervene to alleviate the suffering of the faithful and why he feels abandoned in his own spiritual journey.

It is only when he is forced to apostasize by stepping on the *fumi-e* (a likeness of Jesus) that he is finally able to listen to the voice of God. In the end, God revealed his voice to Rodrigues not when everything seems well, but at the moment of greatest conflict within him physically and spiritually. In the end, God is not silent.

The second silence in the story is the silence of the Hidden Christians, which is represented in the story by the character Kichijiro, who repeatedly apostasises to escape persecution - even to the point of betraying fellow Christians to save himself – and then seeks forgiveness from the priests, again and again.

Kichijiro feels guilty and laments that he is not strong enough to be a martyr. While Father Rodrigues struggles with offering absolution to Kichijiro who keeps committing the same sin over and over out of weakness, he also reflects that indeed, 'not all men are saints and heroes'.

Talk 3. The sea as the image of God

Seas, oceans, and water hold considerable symbolic meaning in Endo's stories. Often he uses the sea as a symbol of divine intervention, or even of God himself.

In his first novel, To Athens (1953), Endo portrays the Endo's final novel, Deep River (1993), tells the story of sea as a representation of God. 'This sea remains a journey to the River Ganges, where many people go seeking blessings and answers. Endo believes that God, forever motionless, doesn't it?' he writes, suggesting that God appears indifferent to the events unfolding in like the Ganges, is willing to accept everyone. No matter the world. But the question, 'Doesn't it?' challenges this what burdens we carry or what our past stories are, if we interpretation. Although it may seem that God does not are willing to be immersed in the river. God will always intervene in worldly matters, it raises the question: Is God accept us. And when we choose to immerse ourselves truly motionless and devoid of emotions? in the river, we are also open to the stories of the people around us, embracing their stories and sadness.

In Silence, the sea serves as a channel through which missionaries brought Christianity to Japan. But it's also a place where Christians faced martyrdom and sacrifice. One character, Father Grappe, drowns in the sea as he is persecuted, while others are tied to crosses placed near the ocean where they are pounded by the powerful waves.



The Hidden Christians in Silence wonder why God would create them as seemingly weak individuals only to subject them to such severe tests. Such questions reflect the profound inner turmoil and crisis of faith experienced by the Hidden Christians. Endō uses Kichijiro to reveal these inner struggles.

The third aspect of silence in the story is the silence of history. Church history is written according to the story of those who are willing to die for their faith. However, the Hidden Christians understood that if every believer were to become a martyr, Christianity would disappear.

Endō uses the experience of Hidden Christians and their silent endurance to draw attention to the silence of history. He prompts readers to reflect on the complexities of strength and weakness within the context of faith: 'Actually who is the person to decide who is strong and who is weak? And who is to tell when the weak apostatise they are not full of pain and struggle?'

Thus the sea symbolises the challenges, sacrifices, and resilience of the Hidden Christians in Japan during a time of religious persecution.

Which brings us back to one of the themes of Silence mentioned earlier: it is important to link our suffering with the sadness of others, and to remember that no one is suffering alone.

Michaelmas Fair 2023

CHAELMA

The Michaelmas Fair returned in full swing at of Michaelmas Fair Committee; Mr Patrick Fung, Vice St John's Cathedral on 28th October 2023 after three years of COVID-19 restrictions. The church grounds were once again packed with booths offering delicious food, holiday gift items, secondhand books, and many other products and services. Although the weather threatened rain much of the day, we were fortunate to have good weather throughout.

the Rt Revd Dr Matthias Der, Bishop of Diocese of Hong Kong Island; Mrs Lisa Liem, Guest of Honour; the Very Revd Kwok-keung Chan, Dean of St John's Cathedral; Mr John Li, Member of Cathedral Council; Mr Craig Lindsay, Trustee of Cathedral Council; Mr Michael Li, Chairman

Chairman of Michaelmas Fair Committee; and other guests. The opening ceremony featured bagpipers, traditional Chinese drums and a local troop of Scouts.

Following the ceremony, participants had great fun playing the games at booths and searching for good bargains at various stalls in the Li Hall, Harold Smyth Room, Fanny Li Hall and the garden.

Meanwhile, we also enjoyed performances The Fair 2023 began with an opening ceremony graced by staged by our Cathedral Filipino Fellowship and Friends of the Harp; representatives from participating schools; as well as Hong Kong Morris. The fun-filled Fair wrapped up with the Grand Raffle Draw in the Cathedral garden.

Steve Hackman, Evelyn Chan



LEC Celebrates Its 5th Anniversary



Happy Birthday, LEC!

Celebrating the fifth birthday of Life Enrichment Centre reminds us that even in our early years, the knowledge and experiences we acquire begin to shape the foundation of our future. Although we may be considered young children at the age of five, the lessons we learn and the skills we develop during this time play a significant role in shaping the trajectory of our lives.

I greatly appreciate the hard work of Vanice and her team throughout the years. Through their commitment, LEC has gradually become an essential part of our Cathedral, fostering connections between volunteers, youth, and our church community. Moreover, LEC has been actively engaged in programmes aimed at serving and making a positive impact on the community. What I observe is not just a team capable of providing service, but a team that has the power to ignite hope and transform lives.



I am glad for being a part of the team to share this joy with all of you. May God's blessings be upon the Centre, the Cathedral, and all their future endeavours, and may we always be aspired to inspire, enriching lives in this our beloved city we call home.

The Revd Amos Poon, Chaplain

Time has flown by, and LEC is into its fifth year of operation. This extraordinary mission started off as a conversion from our previous HIV Centre, as an outreach which would reflect the needs of our times, and cater for an important sector of our community – our young people.

I have had the humbling privilege to chair the Advisory Committee of the LEC since its inception. For a Cathedral steeped in tradition and easily viewed by young people as old fashioned, the work that has been achieved to draw young people to our midst is nothing short of a miracle of God and the result of relentless hard work of the LEC team.

From being a somewhat mysterious historical building to be viewed only from afar, we now have wonderful, talented, amazing young people who attend our weekly fellowship AMONG US, who find comfort in being in the company of friends in a cozy corner of our LEC office, strumming on a guitar or cracking silly jokes, who go on hikes with our LEC team and Cathedral clergy and who help out with activities. Working alongside the Cathedral Youth Ministry, our outreach activities - including student mentorship, youth drama productions, teaming up with disabled persons in music performances in the Cathedral, enjoying a surprise evening meal by Aunty June Li, and much more – bring out this one important LEC mission: servicing the needs of young people, offering a point of focus, friendship, comfort, and sharing the Good News...





I thank, in the most heartfelt of ways, our LEC team, who are no less than miracle workers - Vanice, Rooney, Iris, Ray, Roysee, Arvinder (ex-colleague) and the many interns and staff who have served in LEC before. Vanice is the brainstormer, the strategist, the leader who is the glue that keeps everything together. Tremendous thanks also to Dean KK Chan for supporting us and Father Amos Poon for his enormous talent in communicating with young people. Apart from being a spiritual teacher, Father Amos connects with young people through hiking and his admired talent in origami.

Much appreciation also to our patrons Mr David Tse and Dr Joseph Chan, as well as the Advisory Committee – Margaret, TK, James and Elda. Thank you for your ideas, contribution, loving care and support always for this outreach mission. The Cathedral staff are always cheerfully ready to help and more, and we are deeply grateful.

Our Cathedral is one which welcomes all, and LEC does likewise. We look for your continued support going forward. Please get in touch if you are interested in connecting with young people or want to support our projects.

Chair of LEC Advisory Committee

I have been at the Life Enrichment Centre for almost three years and have witnessed many touching stories, impossible yet "you can make it!" experiences, and unconditional love with persistent challenges. I have witnessed the success of the centre in building up the youth little by little. Although I come from a social work background, it is not by any skill or ability, but by God's grace, which has paved the way for all of us to support our young people, and of course, it is necessary to praise him for their great ability and motivation. In Timothy 4.12, it says "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

I remember when I first came to work at St John's Cathedral, I didn't know anyone and we all had to wear masks. I needed lots of effort to meet with different people via Zoom, and sometimes I had to work alone in the Centre, which was a challenge to me. Thanks to the many kind-hearted parishioners and young people who accompanied me and made me not feel lonely. It is not easy to work for youth ministry nowadays, but in the Lord, they all give me a lot of strength.

Thanks to Cursillo, I have met a group of very caring friends, and because of them, I had the opportunity to go to the Holy Land of Israel this year, and then came back to try being the Cathedral Server. This is all by God's grace. I remember the Most Revd Hosam Naoum, the Bishop of Israel, told me that the youth

'It is really my pleasure that I can accompany LEC as a staff and volunteer in the past two years to leap past obstacles and mark different milestones. One of the most remarkable milestones of LEC is the drama project, which is now known as Once Theatre. We started from zero in November 2021 to holding two performances in October 2022, with a total of 450 audience members. This year, the Once Theatre will be having three shows in Y studio in Chai Wan on 4^{th} and 5^{th} November. We hope you will come and support our show.

There are also other remarkable milestones – for example, the Beat Drug Fund project, for which LEC held a public speaking competition in the first year and a carnival in the second year. Also, LEC held an inclusive concert at the 174-year-old cathedral in February 2023. Moreover, LEC has a regular 'chill night' for youth, named AMONG US every Friday.



are our future at churches, so we must emphasise the youth ministry. He inspired me to continue to serve the Lord and to influence lives, without forgetting my original intention.

Thank you so much to Julianne Doe, our Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, for all her encouragement and assistance in leading the LEC direction, as well as Fr Amos Poon, Jason Wong and Dr Elda Chan's special support to me and all the youth from AMONG US, Once Theatre, Between, run group, etc. I won't repeat the names of those whom Julianne thanked in the above sharing, but I would like to thank all whom I met in the Cathedral, especially my teammates and those who had supported me and youth work. Without their support and unconditional love, the work could never be done. Lastly, thanks to our Heavenly Father for the opportunity to meet them in my life.

Vanice Chan, LEC Service Coordinator

There are so many other things LEC has achieved in the past five years which I don't have room to list here. I am looking forward to seeing how far LEC can go in the next five years.

Seraph Wong, LEC Youth Volunteer

It's the fifth anniversary for LEC. I remember I hadn't been at LEC since 2021. I remembered it being on the second floor (next to Fanny Li Hall).

When I went there for the first time, there was literally no furniture. Therefore, our LEC coordinator, Vanice had bought some DIY furniture. It was a great experience to make up furniture such as table etc. In these years, LEC had held different varieties of activities such as the drama project, talks and carnivals. I've seen the centre starting from a few people at first to grow to a large amount of people involved in the development of LEC!

'When I first came to St John's Cathedral, I viewed church as a boring place. However, my perception changed when I encountered AMONG US, a youth fellowship that completely transformed my experience. Through this article, I would like to share my journey and express my gratitude for the opportunities and friendships I have gained.

Initially, I reluctantly followed my mother to the Cathedral, expecting another mundane experience. However, everything changed when Vanice approached me and invited me to join AMONG US. Intrigued, I decided to give it a chance. Little did I know that this decision would lead to a series of enjoyable and fulfilling experiences. As a participant, I found myself fully immersed in every gathering, cherishing the camaraderie and sense of belonging.



Over time, my involvement in AMONG US grew, and I became a committee member. This role allowed me to contribute to the organisation and witness firsthand how the gatherings became more systematic and well-prepared. Beyond the administrative work, I am immensely grateful to AMONG US for providing a platform to forge numerous genuine friendships. The individuals I met through this fellowship are not only



🎽 James Yim, Youth Ministry Leader



authentic but also incredibly kind-hearted. I genuinely hope that more people can join us and share in these wonderful times.

AMONG US is part of a larger initiative called the LEC, which has also formed a volunteer team. Although I cannot participate as frequently as I would like, attending their meetings has shown me the deep enthusiasm that the youth of LEC possess. Witnessing their sincere desire to serve society fills me with immense pride, as I see my peers actively making a meaningful difference in the world.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my heartfelt wishes to the LEC as they celebrate their fifth anniversary. May the Lord bless and guide them on their journey of continuous growth and empowerment. Through AMONG US and the LEC, I have discovered a renewed sense of purpose and a community that supports and uplifts one another. I encourage anyone seeking meaningful connections and opportunities to join us and experience the joy that comes from being part of something greater than oneself.'

Ammuri Lee, Youth Ministry Leader

The Cathedral Youth Ministry was established in April 2021 when our youth fellowship AMONG US was created. At least, that is what most believe.

Some may remember that we once had another youth fellowship, aimed at university and postgraduate students. This group was established in January 2017 by our friend Fr Adam Mo, but was sadly laid to rest after most participants left to pursue further studies overseas.



Armed with this new obscure knowledge, perhaps you might not be surprised to find that I was skeptical about the rebirth of a youth fellowship in our Cathedral community. Somehow, by the Grace of our Lord, AMONG US has now entered its third year of existence. Through the pioneering efforts of Fr Amos Poon, Vanice Chan, and Jason Wong, we have flourished with growing numbers. We have around 10 regular participants, with many more attending pro re nata. We continue to experiment with our gatherings by including various new events and themes, such as cultural activities, handicrafts, meditation, Bible and theological study, evening prayer, and even liturgical education.

The success of AMONG US is, without any doubt, connected to the hard work done by our Cathedral's Life Enrichment Centre. The LEC, through the glorious





enigma of church administration, has come to coordinate most of the daily operations of AMONG US. For many people, the work of AMONG US is indistinguishable from the work of the LEC. Guests with connections to the LEC are invited to join our gatherings; we use the LEC premises for preparation and for post-fellowship gatherings; LEC staff sit on the AMONG US committee; and AMONG US participants assist in various LEC outreach services, etc. The list goes on and on.



One must also not forget the Youth Ministry's drama committee. After the successful inaugural performance last October, it has now been spun off into its own separate entity, named Once Theatre.

The relationship between the Youth Ministry (both AMONG US and Once Theatre) and the LEC is symbiotic, yet is as mysterious in its organisation as the Holy Trinity. Regardless of the true relationship between the various entities mentioned above, we can be certain that the LEC has supported the Youth Ministry constantly over the past three years, and has contributed significantly towards its success.

May I wish the LEC a happy fifth birthday, and may it continue to intertwine with our Youth Ministry.

Andrew Lim, Youth Ministry Leader



The Cathedral Council is sad to report that our most senior Cathedral Council member and respected sister in Christ, Mrs June Li, passed away peacefully in hospital on 31st October, All Saints' Eve.

Our beloved Auntie June is now in re-union with Canon Fook Hing Li and all the faithfully departed, probably handing out Toblerone to those in the heavenly kingdom.

She is a giant in many aspects. We had just finished our Michaelmas Fair 2023 on Saturday 28th October, and nobody will disagree that the Patron, Auntie June, contributed tremendously to the success of the Fair, this year and past years. She held this post for decades. Auntie June was kind-hearted and generous to various charitable organizations, and devoted herself so much to countless fundraising events. She was also deeply involved in educational ministries in various Anglican schools - we can see so much evidence in these schools today.

In the Cathedral community, Auntie June was the most diligent worshipper, sitting quietly in the front row pews every Sunday at the 9.00am Sung Eucharist. Her hospitality to all the Cathedral members, regardless of our background, ethnicity or positions, is so fondly missed by most members of our congregations. Her contributions to the Cathedral, the Diocese as well as the Province of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, cannot be listed in one or two sentences. We will definitely remember this giant of spirituality, charity, and hospitality.

Mrs Li will be sorely missed and fondly remembered. Our thoughts and She will be missed - she along with her late prayers are with Lisa, John, Karen and all the members of the Li family. May husband have left an indelible mark on the history of Auntie June rest in peace and rise in glory. our cherished Cathedral.

The Very Revd Kwok-keung Chan

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'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

Here I am, Lord. Send me.

When God looked over the island of Hong Kong and saw its needs and potential, in his wisdom, He sent a 100-lb, 5ft 2in newly married woman from Cincinnati, Ohio. She must have come to Hong Kong with some apprehension, since her Cantonese was not fluent and she had married into a very

large and prominent family. She did not have a slingshot like David, or profound oratory like Isaiah. But through a thousand kindnesses, she showed us a way forward through her knitting, embroidery of kneelers, cleaning of the Cathedral and beautifying it with stained glass, selection of altar cloths and clergy vestments, donations of hymnals, cooking and canning 2,000 bottles of jam a year, organising craft fairs, being Patron for the Michaelmas fair for almost half a century, raising money for St Stephen's Girls College, feeding clergy and layman at the Li Hall, the Hong Kong

In Fond Memory of Mrs June Li

I am saddened to hear of the passing of our Mrs June Li, a truly remarkable woman and a great supporter of St John's Cathedral and the Michaelmas Fair for many years.

I moved to Hong Kong and started attending St John's Cathedral in 1996, and gradually got to know June and her husband Canon Li Fook Hing. They were a truly remarkable couple, who enjoyed each other's company, had a great amount of love for each other, their family and St John's Cathedral. As they both gracefully aged, I was always impressed with their levels of energy, good appetites, love of people and treating everyone with respect and kindness. Mrs Li was always involved in different charities and projects at St John's Cathedral and when she wanted to get something done, she would not take no for an answer. She was working on this year's Michaelmas Fair right up to a couple of days before her passing, as its annual success was very important to her.

Craig Lindsay

Club, her house and more. I think we can all say we were lucky and blessed to know her and to benefit from her generosity. When my children were young they referred to Mrs Li as 'the M&M lady', as she always had small packs of these candies in her handbag for them. She also attended my father's funeral and organised a collection in his name. Her most enduring gift may be that when we look at ourselves in the mirror, she gently challenges us to follow her example in showing what devotion to a Christian life can mean; and how to put our faith into practise.

Martin Matsui

Sharing Mid-Autumn Joy with seniors in western Hong Kong Island

Twenty volunteers from St John's led by the Revd Mark Rogers visited the HKSKH Western District Elderly Community Centre (WDECC) on 21st September 2023 to spend time with seniors in the centre and celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with them.

The event marks Part 4 of our initiative in reaching out to seniors in our community to provide them with love, comfort and companionship during festive seasons (Matthew 25.35-37), particularly those who are living alone on Hong Kong Island. Prior to the Mid-Autumn event, volunteers arranged a number of events with the seniors from WDECC in the past 12 months, including a Christmas party, a visitation to St John's Cathedral, a lunch gathering and a half-day outing to Stanley Beach with these seniors in the Community Centre.

During the event, the volunteers were divided into five groups and assigned to look after one group of seniors each. Each group of volunteers made newage mooncakes, enjoyed great conversations and built friendships with the seniors. Common topics discussed during the event were stories on the different ways the seniors would celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival in their respective families. The mooncakes made during the event featured different types of filling, and were wrapped and placed in mooncake boxes near the end of the visit. The seniors were also entertained with engaging games throughout the event, and were gifted with traditional lanterns, star fruits and other snacks.









All of the above gifts and activities were received with great enthusiasm and excitement. It was evident that the event helped to express the love that the volunteers and St John's have for these seniors during this festival season.

By the end of the event, all of the volunteers expressed a keen desire to conduct similar events in the future, making the visit a resounding success.

he Revd Mark Rogers, Caius Ng

Origami workshop for parents and kids



On 23rd September, we successfully hosted an Origami Workshop for parents and kids. The event exceeded our expectations, with a total of fifteen families and over 40 participants in attendance. The evening commenced with a delightful light dinner, allowing families to not only bond with their own children, but also provided a platform for different families to connect and engage with one another.

The workshop proved to be more than just a creative activity. It fostered a sense of belonging within the Cathedral Parish. Through the shared experience of crafting origami together, families were able to strengthen their relationships, forge new connections, and deepen their sense of belonging.

During the workshop, I had the opportunity to teach three simple origami art pieces. With the support of their parents, the children successfully created these beautiful artworks. The first origami piece was the heart, which can be folded with just a few steps. Not only is the heart a symbol of love and affection, but it also serves as a card. A special message can be written inside the heart so you can pass it on to someone you want to share it with.

The second piece was a slightly more complex origami butterfly. This design allowed participants to explore additional folding techniques to create a delicate and graceful butterfly. Lastly, we tackled the challenge of folding a Santa Claus origami, adding a festive touch for the upcoming season.

I sincerely hope that both parents and children enjoyed the workshop and had a memorable time crafting these origami pieces together. The positive response and enthusiasm from the participants have inspired me to host more origami workshops in the future, catering to enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels.

My Origami Life and Learning

Origami, an artistic practice rooted in ancient Japan, involves the intricate folding of paper. The word 'origami' itself translates to 'folding paper' in Japanese.

My fascination with origami began during a trip to Japan in 2015. Upon buying some washi (traditional Japanese paper), I started by folding a familiar design from my childhood: the paper crane. However, after creating a few dozen cranes, I started to seek inspiration from YouTube, enabling me to attempt origami designs that are beyond my imagination.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, I embarked on a new endeavour as a YouTuber, creating instructional videos on crafting origami designs. From balloons and hearts to airplanes, boats, and even dragons, my videos offered guidance for viewers. As the pandemic persisted, these videos gained popularity, providing a valuable resource for parents and children alike at a time when opportunities for social activities were limited.

Creating origami has taught me numerous valuable lessons. One of the fascinating aspects is the existence of modular models that can only be constructed using a specific number of paper units, such as 12, 15, or 30. This concept reminds me of the unity and interconnectedness found in Church. Just like the body of Christ, an individual part may have its limitations, but when we are willing to come together and contribute our unique strengths and efforts, great things can be done.

▶ The Revd Amos Poon



True Blessing

The HK6 Cursillo Weekend took place from 31st August to 3rd September 2023 in Honeyville Canossian Retreat House. As the name implies, HK6 is the sixth Cursillo Weekend to run in Hong Kong since 2018, when the Cursillo movement was first introduced to our city by a group of Anglican Christians from Australia.

For those who don't know, Cursillo is 'a movement of the Church providing a method by which Christians are

empowered to grow through prayer, study, and action and enabled to share God's love with everyone.'

HK6 took place during the arrival of Super Typhoon Soala, which saw the Hong Kong Observatory issuing its highest Typhoon Signal (Number 10). Fortunately, the typhoon didn't disrupt the Cursillo Weekend for its participants!

We are pleased to have the HK6 organisers share their personal experience over the 'stormy' weekend.





God is the All Loving God

Carol Kwong, Lay Director:

The biggest blessing I learned during this Cursillo Weekend is that God is the All Loving God.

It was a very special weekend. We experienced the whole process of a strong typhoon, from Typhoon Signal Number 3 to Typhoon Signal Number 10 and back to Number 3. We witnessed the power of nature, and we testified to the mercy of God.

> God is working his beautiful restoration.' Indeed he is the Almighty God.

On Sunday (3rd September) morning, when I looked at the calm and quiet sea, it reminded shattered lives, there's no need for despair, best for us!

me of a little prayer, 'As we survey our We thank the Lord for he had prepared the

Reminders from the ringing of the bell

Vanice Chan. Proctor:

I am very thankful to be able to participate in the HK6 Weekend as the Proctor.

This time, my role was to provide backup support, including material management, daily ringing of the bell to remind people of the gathering time or other various reminders. For me, getting up early to ring the wake-up bell at 6.30am is not something I find difficult. However, constantly using the bell for reminding people to end their current activities (e.g., sleep, sharing, etc.) is difficult for me because I don't enjoy being a housekeeper too much. Rather, I'd like to share with people as much as I can to rejoice together, and to be cooperative and obedient. However, I learned a lot through the grace is from. Every role in a team has its this role with many reminders.

Corinthians 4.2: 'Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.' I remember the Rt Revd Matthias Der, our Diocesan Bishop, speaking at I was also grateful to have given the talk the Eucharist before the Weekend about about 'Grace' and help share God's love to preparing for the best for God. This bell, every time it rings, is a reminder to myself whether or not I am prepared for the Lord, whether I am faithful enough and reminding me where those who are still searching for God.





own significance, and I am thankful to have served in this team from different churches, and especially to have learned team spirit, humble love and willingness.

others. 1 John 4.19: 'We love because he first loved us.' May God's love be with all our participants, teams, families, churches and

A marvellous work of contextualisation

The Revd Amos Poon, Spiritual Advisor:

The most memorable thing for me at HK6 was certainly the time we spent together at Honeyville when a powerful typhoon struck Hong Kong. Watching the sea as the weather transformed from a gentle breeze to a tumultuous storm was a truly once-ina-lifetime event. Although the weather was rough, we were safe during our time in the site, and on the day we ventured out, it was pleasantly sunny. It was a testament to the efforts of numerous Cursillistas, we divine providence of God, reminding us of his watchful care and guidance even amidst the HK5 and further enhanced it for HK6. As a most challenging circumstances.

The biggest blessing from God for HK6 meditations were conducted in Cantonese. was that the programme has gradually been translated into Chinese. Originally contextualisation, enabling Cursillo to passed down from the Australian Church, the materials we used were exclusively I hope to witness Cursillo flourishing even available only in English. The first four more in our Chinese-speaking parishes, HK Cursillo Weekends (HK1-4) were all in English. However, thanks to the dedicated



embarked on the translation process during result, the majority of talks were delivered in Cantonese, and most of services and This showcases a marvellous work of deeply resonate with the local community. and it will become a profound blessing for their congregation members.

Overwhelmed by working together as a community

The Revd Polly Wong, Spiritual Advisor:

I was very grateful to work together with Ling Yeung as the table leaders for our St Lydia group, which was absolutely a stunning, fascinating and energetic, amazing group.

I also was very much overwhelmed by the experience of working together as a community during HK6. Though we were very exhausted from the tight schedule over a long weekend in Honeyville, I saw that team members and participants were melded together after experiencing the Holy Spirit's works through singing, sharing, discussion Talent Night'.

I was so delighted to be given a chance to share my favourite topic on 'Apostolic Action'. I was not only given opportunity to speak, but also to lead a reflection. The most important thing is that when we show what Christianity is about to non-believer friends, we don't have to do any hard sell, or manipulate them, or pretend to help them with the ulterior motive



of converting them. We just share our faith by our action. Trust God - he will soften their hearts in his own time.

Last but not the least, I want to share the and caring, as well as our 'HK6 Cursillo Got new lyrics from our St Lydia group at 'HK6 Cursillo Got Talent Night'. The name of the song is 'The Phantom of Lydia'. You are most welcome to sing with the 'Phantom of the Opera' music with the following new lyrics:

> We are in Cursillo #HK6, we have a fabulous love song to sing, It is just for fun don't laugh at us ...

Enjoy and have fun.

God's mercy was manifested

Witty Lee, Musician:

The most memorable thing was the spirit of fellowship and sharing that drew us together. Team members prepared for the talks and hymns to share their faith and personal testimony, hoping to encourage fellow brothers and sisters in their walk of faith. Participants from different parishes were willing to work as teams in the discussions and activities, hoping for personal growth and fellowship bonding. All of us helped and motivated each other one way or another when we shared genuinely and participated fully in HK6.

The biggest blessing was being sheltered from Typhoon Saola. God's mercy was manifested in the timing of the typhoon and the location of the venue. Miraculously, we were able to check in to our camp site dry

Tranquility in the typhoon

Jacky Yiu, Musician:

I treasure the cooperation among team members, especially the joy of singing and playing music during the weekend. Serving in the music team is a great experience.

The most amazing blessing has to be the tranquility in the typhoon: no interruption at all for the whole weekend, despite the adverse weather.

Wonderful to see God at work

John Tanner, Musician:

Apart from the typhoon, of course I would naturally say the music was most memorable aspect of HK6 for me. We had a great music team this year with Witty Lee and Jacky Yiu. And as a non-Chinese speaker, I enjoyed the challenge of learning to play Chineselanguage hymns for the first time ever.

Meanwhile, the greatest blessing for me was being able to serve on the team again after missing the last two weekends. I truly believe in the mission of Cursillo, and it was wonderful to see God at work in the team to share that mission with our new Cursillistas.







and comfortably well ahead of the rain and wind. The convenient location of the camp site also made transportation of people and goods much easier. When Typhoon Signal Number 10 was hoisted, we were safely sheltered in the camp. All our programmes ran smoothly as scheduled. The weather was very fine when we departed from the venue after checking out, which was more than what we could ask for. God is watching over us all the time.



ADVENT CALENDAR



DECEMBER 2023

Embracing the spirit of Advent, let's light the candle (colour the flame) after reading the Psalm of the day.





Ps 30.5 For his anger is but for a moment; his favour is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.



Ps 144.15 Happy are the people to whom such blessings fall; happy are the people whose God is the Lord.

Major Services

Discovery Bay Church

SKH Wei Lun Primary School Lantau Tel: 5180 5106 URL: www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk

Every Sunday

10.00am Sung Eucharist

10 The Second Sunday of Advent

DEC 10.00am Nine Lessons and Carols

24	Chris
DEC	6.00pr

stmas Eve Christingle with Nativity Play

Family Eucharistic Celebration of the Incarnation

St Stephen's Chapel

St Stephen's College 22 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley Tel: 2813 0408 URL: www.ststephen.org.hk

Every Sunday

10.00am Sung Eucharist

The Second Sunday of Advent

6.00pm

Christmas Lessons and Carols by Candlelight with St Stephen's Chorale

St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong Tel: 2523 4157 URL: www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk

The First Sunday of Advent 3

DEC 5.00pm

'Looking for the Light A Service for the beginning of Advent

'Blue Christmas' Eucharist

The Second Sunday of Advent 10

DEC 5.00pm

16 6.00pm DEC

Carol Service with Eucharist (Cantonese)

The Third Sunday of Advent

DEC 5.00pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

23 3.00pm DEC 4.30pm Crib Service Christingle



24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent / **Christmas Eve**

8.00am	Said Eucharist
9.00am	Sung Eucharist
10.30am	Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)
11.45am	Responsorial Eucharist
1.30pm	Sung Eucharist (Filipino)
11.00pm	Midnight Mass of the Nativity and Blessing of the Crib

25 Christmas Day

DEC 8.00am Said Eucharist 9.00am Sung Eucharist 10.30am Sung Eucharist (Mandari 11.45am Responsorial Eucharist with Carols Sung Eucharist (Filipino) 1.30pm

31 **New Year Eve**

DEC	8.00am	Said Eucharist
	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
	10.30am	Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)
	11.45am	Responsorial Eucharist
	1.30pm	Sung Eucharist (Filipino)
	11.00pm	Watchnight Eucharist

Epiphany Sunday

5.00pm Diocesan Dedication Evensong JAN

The Second Sunday of Epiphany 14

5.00pm

14 Ash Wednesday

FEB 8.00am Said Eucharist 12.00 noon Said Eucharist (Cantonese) 7.30pm Sung Eucharist

Please visit our website for the latest updates about service arrangements.

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DEC 10.00am

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DEC

25 Christmas Day

Choral Evensong with the Installation of Cathedral Canons



at St John's & Daughter Churches

Emmanuel Church

Béthanie Chapel 139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam Tel: 2523 4157 URL: www.emmanuel.org.hk

Every Sunday 10.30am Sung Eucharist



24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent/ **Christmas Eve**

10.30am Sung Eucharist 10.30pm Midnight Mass of the Nativity and Blessing of the Crib



25 Christmas Day

DEC 10.30am Sung Eucharist with Carols





25 Christmas Day

Christmas Eucharist with Carols

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Be Friends with the Environment

A little step by all of us can make a sea change to our environment. We invite our readers to join us in protecting the environment. There are two ways to get involved:

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The Cathedral Office keeps a subscription list of In *Touch*, and mails hard copies of the magazine to readers and parishioners quarterly. If you choose to pick up the magazine at St John's Cathedral, fewer plastic bags will be used for delivery. Please inform us by filling out and returning the form below to the Cathedral Office if you would like to unsubscribe from the mailing list.

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