Activities of the Various English Speaking Groups

Rosary Church

September 2016 to August 2017

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**Introduction**

Parishes have been keeping records of births, weddings and funerals for over 500 years. Priests sometimes wrote letters to the bishop, which historians love to find. Rosary Church opened in 1905. By 1907 the novelty of a Catholic Church in Kowloon had passed. I’m not sure how many yellow and crumbling old papers are on file in the parish office. What were the people in our pews discussing in earlier years? Let me guess…

- 1907 Passengers sailing into Victoria Harbour from the east see a beach, railroad tracks, a narrow road, and the steeple and roof of our scenic church. We are proud to have the highest building in the area. After Mass one Sunday we were amazed to see a horseless carriage moving by itself on Chatham Road. An automobile!
- 1917 The Great War in Europe has already lasted three years. We pray this will be the War To End All Wars; we pray the upcoming League of Nations will oversee perpetual global peace.
- 1927 Western nations are prosperous and the situation in China seems to be returning to normal. The future looks sunny. There is no talk of a stock market crash and an economic depression.
- 1937 The Japanese army is advancing south of the Great Wall, far from Hong Kong. Surely Japan knows better than ever to go to war with the UK. We feel safe.
- 1947 Civil war rages in China. Which side will win? Refugees are starting to arrive in Hong Kong.
- 1957 Latin Mass continues using the same words as 400 years ago. We are sure the rituals and hymns will never change.
- 1967 Big changes in church after Vatican II, and riots on the streets of Hong Kong. We keep the faith, continue to work long hours, and educate our children for a better future.
- 1977 The city is filled with garment, plastic and shoe factories. Living standards are improving and everyone
has a job, but rents have increased. Don’t worry! The colonial government will do something in a year or two to reduce high rent.

- 1987 As we enter the final decade under the British flag, nervous people relocate to Canada or the UK for a few years to obtain residency. Most of these “astronauts” later returned to Hong Kong. The Catholic Diocese expresses trust in God and commitment to the people here.

- 1997 A new flag flies over the new H.K.S.A.R. The transition went smoothly and we feel relieved.

- 2007 An even more crowded city, with more and more Catholic and Protestant Christians filling the churches.

- 2017 Both men and women in Hong Kong enjoy the highest life expectancy of any area in the world, along with one of the lowest crime rates of any big city. We see more people with gray hair using canes and wheelchairs but fewer people smoking cigarettes. We count our blessings.

- 2027 – God knows.

On a personal note, someone asked me recently, “Father, how much longer will you remain in Rosary Church?” I replied, “At least 30 minutes, and at most 30 years.” I arrived at the end of November 2012 and I’d be happy to spend quite a few more years here. People are friendly. I thank you.

Just like a year ago, I can type a long list of people who deserve a word of thanks. We have so many volunteers in different ministries. They are easy to see during Mass. Other parishioners lend a hand outside of church to people in need. If I mention names, I will forget many people. We all know some of them. As for the complete list, it’s not on file in the parish office. God knows.

Fr. Michael J. Sloboda, M.M.
Assistant Parish Priest
English Pastoral Committee - (EPC)

The English Pastoral Committee ("EPC") is composed of parishioners who have been invited by the Pastor to represent members of the parish community who use English as their language of worship.

The current committee members are:
President : D’Ann da Silva
Treasurer : Manoj Sadarangani
Secretary : Rina Nicolas-Santos
General Committee :
Deirdre Chaves, Lorraine Hamet, Benjamin Kwong, Mary Chen Law, Lenny Limbaga, Maria Raichandani, Remy Sabinano, Ruel Trinidad and Elaine Zuniga
The EPC, through Fr. Mike Sloboda, advises the pastor on issues concerning the community. The EPC takes the lead role in planning and implementing special liturgies, activities and the like. It meets on the second Friday of each month and holds its AGM every January.

Through the year the parish enjoyed various services and programs.

Towards the end of every August the parish thanks the altar servers by inviting them to a pool party and dinner, usually held at Mariners’ Club. In 2016, that was held on 25th August.

The annual “Family Living Rosary” service was held in church on the afternoon of 30th October, 2016 in honour of our patroness – Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. Members of the Children’s Choir, Life Teen, and parishioners who attended the service participated as human beads during the recitation of five decades of the rosary.

On 20th November – the end of the liturgical year – the EPC organized the annual Eucharistic Adoration in honour of the Solemnity of Christ the King. The adoration took place in the parish hall after the 12.30 p.m. Sunday Mass and ended at 6.00 p.m. with benediction in the church.

EPC members helped to set up the Christmas trees in the hall and the courtyard as well as all the decorations in the church and rectory. The tree in the courtyard is named “The Giving Tree” and, as is now customary, a request was made for donations of specific items for the food bank “Feeding Hong Kong”. Our parishioners were very generous.
In the lead-up to Holy Week, a Lenten Recollection was conducted by Fr Mike Sloboda during the daily 6:30 p.m. Masses on 3rd, 4th and 5th April, 2017, preaching the theme “The Seven Sacraments”.

The annual reconciliation service in preparation for Easter was held in church on the afternoon of Palm Sunday, 9th April 2017.

To commemorate the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal the EPC showed the video on “Fatima” on the afternoon of 14th May 2017.

And finally, the numbers in our church continue to grow. From September 2016 to August 2017 Fr Mike Sloboda baptized 20 children and three adults.

**Children’s Catholic Instruction Program**

Classes for 2016-2017 began on 3rd September, 2016 and were held every Saturday morning from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m.

On the eve of Pentecost, 3rd June, 3017, 13 children received First Holy Communion and 18 young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation at a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by our Bishop, John Cardinal Tong. Our Parish Priest, Fr John Baptist Tsang and assistant pastor, Fr. Mike Sloboda, concelebrated.

A gathering of family and friends took place afterwards in the Parish Hall to celebrate the children’s special day.
At a penitential service held the week before on 28th May, 2017, 11 children received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.

Mustard Seed Charismatic Prayer Group

The Prayer Group meets every Wednesday evening to praise and worship God in prayer, song and Scripture reading.

During the course of the year, the Prayer Group arranged Mass for Healing on the last Wednesday of every other month as a service to the parish. These Masses were usually well attended.
The group continues to be blessed to have Fr. Timoteo Merino, O.P. and Fr Terrance Mascarenhas, S.V.D. helping out with the Mass for Healing.

Mustard Seed would like to take this opportunity to invite anyone who would like to spend an evening in praising God to join us on Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. in the 1st floor Meeting Room of the Church Rectory.

**Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA Program)**

The RCIA is a year-long program for English speakers. Classes are held every Friday evening from 8 to 9:30 p.m. in the 1st floor Meeting Room of the Church Rectory. The classes for 2016 began on 23rd September and ended in June 2017.

At the Easter Vigil 2017, three adults received the Sacrament of Initiation.

The course includes common prayers, the rosary, the Seven Sacraments, the Five Rules of the Church, etc.

**Rosary Church Children's Choir**

The Children’s Choir is a group of young people, aged 7-12, who attend Saturday afternoon rehearsals in preparation for various social occasions and special liturgies in the parish.

At present, there are 23 children in the choir.
As in previous years, the Children’s Choir parents core group organized a number of fellowships to celebrate birthdays, Halloween and Christmas.

Orientation, recruitment and training for potential choir members are ongoing through the course of the year.

The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) HK

Our meditation Group continues to meet every Tuesday in the Library at 8:00 p.m. New members are very welcome!

Over the past year we are happy to report that we have around 6-8 meditators attending each of our sessions. We are thankful to Fr. Tommy Murphy for attending our meditation sessions whenever he is in Hong Kong.

WCCM(HK) continues to grow and our core members have been busy giving presentations and talks in Chinese to
parishes and schools. At the beginning of the year we were happy to welcome Fr. Laurence Freeman to Hong Kong once again and to give us a Talk which was well attended. In April we also had a fruitful Retreat and Talk given by Fr. Paul Cheong OFM from Malaysia.

We look forward to hosting our 37th Exco Meeting on Tuesday, 10th October 2017.

**Life Teen**

The Rosary Church Life Teen Youth Ministry is now on its thirteenth year and continues to make headway in its mission of “leading our teens closer to Christ”.

English-speaking teenagers of varying ethnicity attend the regularly scheduled Life Nights held every Saturday and the once-a-month Life Teen mass held in the parish.

As they have done so in previous years, our teenagers were at the forefront in the planning and presentation of the annual English Lenten Prayer Service, XLTs, the “Family Living Rosary” held in October 2016 and the traditional Midnight Mass Service last December 2016. The special Life Teen Lenten prayer service entitled “Tenebrae” was held in the parish hall on April this year – the eve of Palm Sunday.

Our teenagers also continue to be active participants of the Diocesan English Youth, which has sponsored various diocesan-wide youth activities and events throughout the past year.
As part of our continuing investment on adult core team formation, Sister Vicky Ramos gave a one-day workshop on basic Catechetics to them on December 8, 2016 at PIME House in Sai Kung.

The teenagers conducted their bi-annual fundraising activity during four consecutive Sundays in March of this year. A total of HKD 75,000/- was collected by the teens from generous parishioners, which will go towards augmenting their annual ministry fund.

Life Teen was able to send 42 teenagers and 20 adult core facilitators to the annual 3-day summer retreat entitled “TIMELESS” at the Salesian House in Cheung Chau from August 25-27, which included a delegation of seven foreign teen participants from the Antioch Community of our sister-parish Sts. Peter and Paul, Makati City, Philippines. Also this year, 32 teenagers and 15 adult core facilitators were able to attend the annual one-day Lenten recollection entitled “Ignatian Examen” held in February at the Trappist Monastery in Lantau.
Life Teen’s twelfth-year anniversary was celebrated last May 6 with a gala party and a special Life Teen Mass celebrated with the 7PM Sunday congregation on May 7.

It was indeed another awesome year full of blessings and graces.

The Youth Minister and his core team prayerfully hold steadfast to their commitment in reaching out to more and more teens.