

HOPE

N e w s l e t t e r



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“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds all together in perfect unity.”

– *Colossians 3:14*

ONE IN CHRIST

Communion-Centered Communities

BLESSING & HEALING

Candles, Throats and the Sick

FAMILY OF FAITH

United in Love and Life

Cover by **Sheila Chiew**

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What does a communion-centered parish mean to us?

This February, the month of Love, I am reminded of this beautiful song, recently released by Catholic artiste Matt Maher, “**Bigger Table**”.

***“In all things God is able
Love has a bigger table
There's an empty seat
Waiting next to me
We gotta make some room
for each other
Let my enemy, be my family
Fill my cup till it's running
over”***



Often parish life is a pilgrimage and test of life itself—facing challenges and conflict, do we shut ourselves and build walls in the

face of pain, hurt and fear? Do we do just the minimum requirements as long we don't hurt other people? Do we attend Mass and prayers fervently yet harbouring resentment and unforgiveness among us?

Yes, we are called to live in love and peace, worshipping the Lord in all we do.

Yet, Christ demands us to more.

Love not just whom we choose but even to **forgiving our enemies!** Help others in need, share what we have, even to **give till it hurts!**

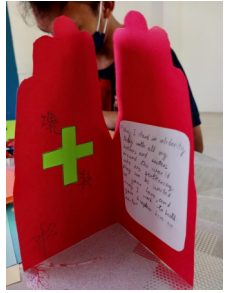
We may be struggling with life challenges and health trials physically, mentally, emotionally, financially etc. But the Lord says to offer our sufferings to Him, to still enlarge the tents and tables of our hearts **for the least, forgotten and marginalized among us!** How

could we do this without His grace? “The visible communion” in the parish can be understood as our priestly father, the mother Church, and a family of brothers and sisters in the faith. “The invisible communion”, especially the Mass joins us with angels and souls in heaven, even the Blessed Trinity!

February is a witness to our parish community life - the Ecumenical Service in COLA, Fr Paul's birthday celebrations in SJC, as well as the Family of Faith Sunday School activities in COOL—bringing the joy of the Lord to all.

We pray too, for the greater community of faith globally, the earthquake victims in Turkiye and Syria, Ukraine marking a year of senseless war, and persecuted Christians everywhere.

In the words of the Holy Father (Angelus 12 February 2023),



So, brothers and sisters, we might ask ourselves: how do I live faith? Is it a matter of calculations, formalism, or a love story with God? Am I content merely with not doing harm, of keeping the “façade” in good order, or do I try to grow in love for God and others? And every now and then, do I check myself on Jesus' great commandment, do I ask myself if I love my neighbor as He loves me? Because perhaps we are inflexible in judging others and forget to be merciful, as God is with us.

Let this February teach us to live in God's love story, to love the way the Lord wants us to love.

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12 February 2023

The message is clear: God loves us first, freely, taking the first step towards us, without us deserving it; and so we cannot celebrate his love without in our turn taking the first step towards reconciliation with those who have hurt us.

God does not reason with calculations and tables; he loves us as one who is enamoured: not to the minimum, but to the maximum! He does not say, “I love you up to a certain point”. No, true love is never up to a certain point, and is never satisfied; love always goes beyond, one cannot do without. The Lord showed us this by giving his life on the cross and forgiving his murderers (cf. Lk 23:34). And he entrusted to us the commandment most dear to him: that we love each other like he loved us (cf. Jn 15:12). This is the love that gives fulfilment to the Law, to faith, to true life!

5 February 2023

"In the face of all this I have said two words: the first is negative: 'enough!'; stop exploiting Africa! The second is positive: 'together,' together with dignity and mutual respect, together in the name of Christ, our hope." "Let us pray that, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, and throughout Africa, the seeds of his Kingdom of love, justice and peace may germinate."

Let us continue to stay close, with prayer and concrete support, to the earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey. I saw on the television programme "A Sua Immagine" the



images of this catastrophe, the pain of these peoples who are suffering as a result of the earthquake. Let us pray for them, let us not forget them, let us pray and think about what we can do for them. And let us not forget tormented Ukraine: may the Lord open ways of peace and give those responsible the courage to follow them.

The news from Nicaragua has saddened me a great deal, and I cannot but remember with concern Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa, whom I care about greatly, sentenced to 26 years imprisonment, and also those who have been

deported to the United States. I pray for them and for all those who are suffering in that dear nation, and I ask for your prayers.

***"Cause love doesn't meet a stranger
Love calls them friend"***



ONE IN CHRIST



COOL Youth Praise & Worship (4 February)

*"Love has a bigger table
Show me who is my neighbor
The Christ hidden in the beggar"*



COOL Youth Rosary for Earthquake Victims (15 February)

On Monday 27.2.2023, the first ever Combined Prayer Meeting was held in COOL parish hall at 7pm, hosted by COOL English and Chinese prayer groups and SJC English, Chinese and Bahasa prayer groups. There was a good turnout of more than 50 people from both parishes of all races, and we look forward to hold this gathering monthly.

The Gospel reading and reflection was on the Transfiguration of Jesus, in both English and Chinese. There were also testimonies and sharing by Dr Richard Toyad, Bro David Teo and Sis Cecilia Chow on the wonderful work of God in their life experiences.

Vocals for English and Chinese charismatic worship songs were co-led by Bro. Simon Wong, Dr. Richard Toyad and Sis. Helga Wong. While the band consists of Bro. Simon Wong, Bro Frederick Liaw, Sis. Jacklyn Chia, English song lead Sis. Marie, and Chinese song lead Sis. Adeline. The video compilation and slides was operated by Bro. Thomas Yee.

The Spirit was among the worshippers, with prayers in Tongues to give glory to God! We praise the Lord Most High for allowing us to gather and worship Him, giving thanks for all His grace and gifts in our lives!

Adeline Ong

27.2.2023 星期一，第一屆 COOL 英華聯合禱會與聖約翰教堂英文、華文和巫文同禱會於晚上 7 點在 COOL 堂區禮堂舉行。由伊班人、華人和其他種族組成的兩個堂區的50多人參加了這項活動！

唱的是英文和中文的讚美主歌曲。它是由Simon Wong兄弟、Richard Toyad 醫生和黃桂蓮姐妹共同領導的。樂隊的成員是Bro. Simon Wong, Frederick Liaw, Sis. Jacklyn Chia, 而帶領英文歌是Sis. Marie, 華文歌是Sis. Adeline. 視頻和編譯操作員是Bro. Thomas Yee.

聖靈，在歌聲中，用方言讚美和感謝上主，將榮耀歸於天主！我們默想福音用英文和中文講述關於"耶穌顯現天主形"的讀經。Richard Toyad醫生，張律師 David Teo 和 週姐妹分享被上主賜予奇妙的經歷來讚美榮耀上主！ a

眾人祈求結束後，我們以一首感恩歌曲結束此次的同禱會。我們每月一次的同禱會以一首詩歌和禱告結束，感謝上主大能在我們中間的工作！讚美和感謝上主！

翁月萍

*"A welcome for the traveler
New wine for the vineyard"*



COOL & SJC English & Chinese Prayer Meeting (27 February)

BLESSING & HEALING

*"Come gather round the mystery
Of love in our broken history
Where grace heals the fault lines in
me"*

In honor of our Parish Patroness, a special Mass was celebrated on 11 February, Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes, also the World Day of the Sick. Those who were sick and ill were given a special blessing during the Mass, and for those who could not attend, the Parish Priest visited them at their homes.



COOL Blessing of Candles, Presentation of the Lord (2 February)



COOL Blessing of Throats, Feast Day of St Blaise (3 February)

**COOL Enthronement
of the Word of God and first
Sunday School Family Mass
(5 February 2023)**

*"Time and time again
it welcomes me into
A house for the hungry
A well for the thirsty"*



COOL Family Open Day (5 February)

It was almost like a carnival gathering after the Family Mass marking the start of Sunday School 2023, where parents and children queued to register as well as buy food from parish groups. Fr Robert

and the Catechetical Ministry gave a briefing to outline the program and priorities of the year, with prayers for the faith of families and children in COOL.



COOL Sunday School Monthly Activity (26 February)



Continuing the theme of Families of Faith, COOL Sunday School initiated a monthly activity for its students and teachers, with 5 stations featuring expressions of Catholic faith in community life through creative, craft,

communication and kitchen/garden activities as well as liturgical familiarization. Simply put, learning and living the faith in a fun way, and what fun everyone had indeed!



COOL Sunday School Monthly Activity (26 February)

Prayer for Our Children

Loving God,
You are the giver of all we possess, the source of all of our blessings.
We thank and praise you. Thank you for the gift of our children.
Help us to set boundaries for them, and yet encourage them to explore.

Give us the strength and courage to treat each day as a fresh start.

May our children come to know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May your Holy Spirit help them to grow
In faith, hope and love so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.

May their ears hear your voice.
May their eyes see your presence in all things.
May their lips proclaim your word.
May their hearts be your dwelling place.
May their hands do works of charity.
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord.
Amen.



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