

Mercy in this time of pandemic

PENANG: Just two days before the country went into lockdown, a Zoom session aptly entitled *Mercy in this Time of Pandemic* was held. It drew an audience of captivated parishioners, ministry leaders and interested viewers who saw this as an opportunity for learning and sharing. The on-line session was hosted by Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap, Parish Priest at the Church of the Divine Mercy (CDM), on the morning of Saturday May 29.

The hour-and-a-half long session and Question & Answer, was a follow-up to the Parish feast day theme of *MERCY: ME, the Risen Christ and You*. Fr Michael's sharing flowed from the spirituality aspect — how the spirit is stirring us from within-and then moved into the "action" portion — discovering what we need to do as a parish, a community and family — to move forward. He began by sharing from St Ignatius of Loyola who asks, in moments of crisis do we wonder if God is with us or is He silent? Fr Michael reminded us that moving forward from the Parish feastday theme of *MERCY: ME, Risen Christ, You*; we have to ask of ourselves how

we are to *Believe, Live and Give in Mercy* through our works of Mercy. These virtues are embodied in the very fibre of the Church of Divine Mercy. How are we to serve those around us especially during this time of isolation, during this time of silence? How can our church move forward in this time?

He noted that, sometimes, we are overwhelmed or even paralysed by the overwhelming outflow of discouraging news around us. The church has had to revolutionise the way we practise our faith today. Our Church is in the digital era where everything from sermons to sacraments to worshipping, is done digitally. There are no boundaries.

Yet, while the church building is empty, we have to realise that the Church is "out there" and we have to live "inside out". We first have to look within ourselves and ask what's happening inside us. We have to deal with the darkness and other issues within ourselves first. Just like Martha and Mary in the Bible, there must be a time of "being" before you can step into the "doing". We have to move from "knowing" to "expe-



Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap giving his sharing on Mercy in this time of Pandemic.

rience". If we only remain at the knowing level, we cannot move forward, Fr Michael said. We may all "know" the Scriptures and the Word of God but we are afraid to move forward into the path of action.

Fr Michael stressed that both depth of spirituality and action were necessary. Ministry without spirituality will leave us just "doing another action but without it flowing from our being". Christian spirituality is about connecting to yourself before connecting to others.

The Gospel passage from Mark 4: 35-41 about the disciples crossing over to the other side while besieged by stormy seas was used to illustrate our present situation. Just like the disciples, we too are in a storm of uncer-

tainty, and in the depths of hearts we too are crying out, afraid of sinking. We too wonder, like the disciples, why Jesus is asleep. However, Jesus quells our fears with the simple question: "Why are you afraid"? When faith is shaken or discouragement sets in, we have to move inside out and we are invited to experience the Lord and His goodness, knowing that everything will pass; that the Lord is with us. "God works in His time and all He requires of us is patience, trust and confidence. Fr Michael reassured participants that once we have embraced the depth of God's mercy to us, then we can move out." Quoting Pope Francis he said: "The Church needs to be a place of mercy and hope where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."

Serve In Mercy wall, a guide to believe, live and give in mercy

PENANG: Parishioners of the Church of the Divine Mercy have been called to become stepping stones for others by serving in mercy — to heed Jesus' call to "love one another as I have loved you." This was the second part of the session given by parish priest Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap on May 29.

When we listen to the spirit within us, we can become a message of hope to someone else. As a parish, Fr Michael suggested that we can use the method of "see, judge, act" to move forward. First, we need to see and understand the fear around us, whether it be anxiety, depression or isolation, and then listen and understand what it is that God wants of us. Then we move to making a decision. This decision should stem from living out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Fr Michael then went on to give concrete examples of how we can act upon this decision by reaching out to the many among us in need of a helping hand. Thus, the movement from *Fear* to *Listening*, *Decision* and finally *Action* was illustrated.

The *Serve in Mercy* wall set up in the Garden of Mercy in the church compound serves as a concrete platform and a larger-than-life testimony of the Parish



Serve in Mercy wall set up in the Garden of Mercy in the church compound.

initiative to go out and make the call to *Believe, Live and Give in Mercy* a reality.

The wall depicts the corporal and spiritual works of mercy which are the bedrock of Catholic living but, especially so, with Divine Mercy believers.

The "Live in Mercy" section provides a space for ministries and BECs to put forward their creative yet practical suggestions on how to carry out works of Mercy, especially during this pandemic.

The "Give in Mercy" section will showcase the fruits of the

works of mercy from testimonies, pictures and letters to outreach projects and more. There will also be space allocated to highlight the ongoing needs of parishioners and others needing help.

Towards the end of the session, Fr Michael left the participants with three questions to reflect on:

1. Is there anything you/we can do, no matter how small, to reach out and touch lives?
2. What changes are needed for me or my community to engage in to influence and improve life around differently?

3. In what manner can we bring mercy and compassion to those we encounter who are in need of assistance?

Participants were later able to share their ideas on how to make the *Serve in Mercy* initiative a success in the Parish. Following up on suggestions, the Parish has since set up a dedicated e-mail and WhatsApp contact for confidential call-ins from those needing help.

The *Serve in Mercy* wall has also gone virtual through the CDM website, www.cdm.my — By Sharon Chandra

Prayer hotline set up in conjunction with the Feast of St Anne, BM

PENANG: In conjunction with the Feast of St Anne 2021, the *Hello, Please Pray for me Hotline* has been initiated, effective from June 1 until August 1. Pilgrims may call any clergy via the numbers below to pray for you.

The allocated time periods are from 9.00am to 12 noon, 3.00pm to 6.00pm and 8.00pm to 9.00pm

We hope that this prayer hotline will be beneficial for all the devotees and pilgrims of Saint Anne amidst the ongoing pandemic and nationwide lockdown.

1 June - 1 August 2021

9am-12pm 3pm-6pm 8pm-9pm

"Hello, Please Pray for Me" PRAYER HOTLINE

STEP 1: SAY "HELLO, PLEASE PRAY FOR ME."
STEP 2: INTRODUCE YOURSELF & STATE YOUR PRAYER INTENTIONS.
STEP 3: PRAY TOGETHER WITH THE PERSON ON THE PHONE.
STEP 4: HANG UP THE PHONE AFTER THE PRAYER HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

★ Please limit your calls to 5 minutes, so as to be considerate & loving to the other callers in queue.
 ★ Please note that this is for PRAYER ONLY. (It is not for Confession or Counselling.)
 ★ Should you be unable to reach a particular number, feel free to contact any of the other persons or you may continue to try again anytime during the designated hours.
 ★ Recording of these calls in all forms by any party is strictly prohibited.

AN INITIATIVE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FEAST OF SAINT ANNE

www.minorbasilicastannebm.com

 Sr. Collete (Daughters of Carmel) 017-5206657 (Bahasa)	 Sr. Tracy (Daughters of Carmel) 017-5206572 (Bahasa)	 Sr. Anastasia (Daughters of Carmel) 017-5206592 (Bahasa, Mandarin & English)
 Sr. Lily Bong Sisters of the Infant Jesus (LIS) 017-5205680 (English)	 Sr. Florence Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sabah (FSIC) 017-5206524 (Bahasa & English)	
 Deacon Rocky 017-5207104 (Bahasa, Mandarin & English)	 Deacon Lazarus 017-5206874 (Bahasa, Tamil & English)	
 Fr Nelson 017-5207109 (Bahasa, Tamil & English)	 Fr Louis Loi 017-5207069 (Bahasa, Mandarin & English)	
 Msgr Henry 017-5207185 (Bahasa, Mandarin, Tamil & English)	 Bishop Sebastian 017-5207135 (Bahasa, Tamil & English)	