

ISSUE
#10



CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
JOHOR BAHRU ✕ 新山耶穌聖心主教座堂



stories from the heart...



新山耶穌聖心主教座堂
CATHEDRAL OF THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS
JOHOR BAHRU

1982-2022

FIND OUT HOW THE CATHEDRAL HAS
HELPED SHAPED WHO WE ARE
TODAY, WHEN WE WERE GROWING
UP AS TEENAGERS / WORKING
ADULTS IN THE 80S

In His Time ...

...He makes all things beautiful.

I was a young non-Catholic who fondly remembers the first time walking into its grandeur and gasping at the beauty of the stained-glass windows, high above the sanctuary. Over the years, the building has gone through many renovations, but its original architecture remains a vivid memory in my mind.

I had left Malaysia for the next 25 years, but each time I return to Sacred Heart Cathedral, the memories of my years spent there comes flooding back. Like hearing an old, familiar song we know so well in our hearts. I still gasp at the significance of this place each time I enter the space. I continue to be at awe of what it meant and what it stands for in my journey in life; no matter where I am.

We were in our formative years when the Sacred Heart Cathedral quickly became one of our favourite places. A place among friends, and family where we felt safe, unpretentious, unjudged, and accepted. It was a place where we could leave our ego at the door and be our authentic



selves. The SHC Student Youth together with our Music Ministry we called Young Hearts Music Ministry, of which we lovingly acronymized the "SY" and "YHMM", embodied a sense of belonging to all of us. It molded the youths then, to who we are today as adults. The friendships we made then remained strong today, if not stronger. The lessons we learnt as teenagers in the S.Y., became the foundation we bear in our hearts as we experience grown-up challenges as parents, husbands, wives, colleagues and most importantly as Catholics.

It is beyond words for myself to express the depth of attachment I have with this church and what it means to me. Sacred Heart was a young church then in the 1980s, we were young then. And look at it now, 40th Anniversary and still growing strong. Blessed 40th!



Sly Seah

Student Youth 1985-1991

"Those were such powerful memories and shapers of my life!"

The Student Youth Group at Sacred Heart Cathedral, JB will always hold a very special and dear place in my life. I joined it when I entered Secondary School and continued to be with them until I left for Singapore for my studies. Growing up as a teenager I spent most of my weekends and all of our holidays at the Cathedral if it was not playing badminton with the Altar Boys (which I was also part of – Knights of the Altar we called ourselves!), I was helping around the church with Uncle Wyner or Auntie Geraldine. I remembered once, Auntie Geraldine saying that you know it is the school holidays when you see Andrew around.



While the Cathedral was so very much part of my growing up years, it was the Student Youth Group that made the deepest impact on me. Whether it was the growing friendships that I had with everyone or the guidance from the Adult Advisors which included people like Auntie Shirley, Auntie Carmel and Uncle Patrick as well as my own mum, Monica – it was a place for me to figure out who I was as well as to develop my leadership and people skills (of course I didn't know it at the time I was developing all these things). Fr VA Michael (who was a seminarian when he was with us) was also powerfully influential. A tall, imposing figure, but gentle always with an enthusiastic spirit. He had a way of listening to us yet gently challenging us to be who we are and getting us to see Jesus in our lives. I remember also all the retreats and camps we had whether it was to Majodi or to Ulu Tiram or the Melaka Youth Rallies – those were such powerful memories and shapers of my life!!

The Ulu Tiram retreats were the ones somehow I have the fondest memories of – I think we had like 3 or 4 retreats there. The place was simple, no locks, no piped water and everything was open.

The beds were simple and the food lovingly prepared by our Adult Advisors – this was the place that I recall most encountering God deeply.

These experiences in my Student Youth days (and there are so many more including the Young Hearts Music Ministry as well as things we did with the Young Adults Group of the Parish... too many to tell!!!) – about the 6 years I was with them grounded me deeply and I know continue to be memories and places in my mind I go to in my darkest moments when I need God most. Shortly after leaving Student Youth when I went to Singapore, I joined the Hosanna! Music Ministry (which has since been dissolved) and I continue to serve at my parish here in Singapore as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council. I am also with the Family Life Ministry here as well as the Catechetical Ministry.

I praise God for those years that have so clearly and deeply shaped me to be who I am. I sometimes wish the same for my two teenage boys – but I know they too will have their own journeys to take and while their specifics may not be the same, I hope for them something that will anchor and shape them like how the Student Youth and the larger SHC parish has shaped me.



Andrew Tan

Student Youth 1985-1991