

ISSUE
#02



CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
JOHOR BAHRU ✕ 新山耶稣圣心主教座堂



*stories from
the heart...*



新山耶稣圣心主教座堂
CATHEDRAL OF THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS
JOHOR BAHRU

1982-2022

SHARING OF MEMORIES

The Sacred Heart Cathedral parish is very much supportive in the area to encourage Filipino expressions of Catholic faith, specifically by creating a space for the El Shaddai group and Filipino mass (initiated and started by Rev. Fr. Lionel, continued by Fr. Eddy and now Fr. Simon SJ), intended to build community and live our faith. SHC parish advocates a multi-cultural atmosphere, Tagalog hymns and language have been incorporated in the multi-lingual masses, which create a sense of cultural, ethnic identity and meaning in our lives. This provides a social structure that allows Filipinos to preserve and transmit our culture via language and encourages fellowship. The Filipinos are being recognised as part of the community.

Being a Filipino and belonging to this parish, I don't feel homesick, or the sense of disconnectedness or uprootedness. Our faith and our families are our life. Families extend well beyond biological relatives. The church members serve as a proxy familial support. Faith and fellowship are important. Being a Filipino our lives have been profoundly touched by religion in one way or another. I draw strength from my faith to help me manage daily challenges. Parishioners are friendly and more accepting.



Catechist formation.

I truly feel the richness of our faith and the universality of the Catholic Church. I have a community to turn to in those times of adjustments especially when I first came to JB in 1985. My late husband George and I have been members of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus since the middle of 1986 when we moved to Taman Kebun Teh, which is the boundary of SHC. I also have a community of very welcoming Catholics who made me feel at home in the church. They made my assimilation into Malaysian culture much easier. The nearest people I could actually blend in with is from the church. It is the easiest way I could have a sense of belonging.

My most significant experience was the spiritual care given to my late husband when he was sick (2006) until he passed away in the year 2007 by the then parish priest Fr. Peter Ng, visiting priests like the late Fr. Bernard Binet, Fr Sebastian (now Bishop of Penang diocese), Bishop Emeritus James Chan and Bishop Emeritus Paul Tan). BEC members prayed for healing and extended help when I needed most, the Divine Mercy group came weekly to pray the chaplet with him, some of the Catechism teachers would take turns to take me out for lunch or dinner just to give me a much needed breather, the LOM group offered prayers too. My family felt love and care from the whole community. These gave me and my children the strength to move on and continue loving the Lord. My late husband was serving as a lector. My 6 children (2 were baptised in this parish) received their Communion, Confirmation and became altar servers in this parish.





First Reconciliation camp 2003.

I joined the Educators of Faith in the year 2003 and actively contributed my time in the Ministry for the next 15 years. I enjoyed teaching the First communicants, conducted "Meet the Parents" sessions and organised bi-annual camps (First Reconciliation and Communion camps), monthly Children's mass (animated by the students), audio visual shows, Rosary making session, making of palm crosses, praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent season and planning of the annual end of the year party and mini concert.



Family Day fancy dress competition

I later moved on to teach the Secondary class. The thrice a year Formation sessions including a retreat for the Catechists moulded me to be a better person, deepen my knowledge of God and strengthened my Spiritual journey.

I have also served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion during mass, to the sick and homebound parishioners. Meeting our homebound parishioners, giving them Communion, talking to them and praying with them ignited my heart to the Spirituality of Caring. There were often stories of suffering, despair, lack of love from their family members, divorce, separation and heart breaking stories.

This parish has given me the opportunity to grow as a person in the Spirituality of service and prayer.

| Josephine G Fernandez



Catechism children and family visiting the Handicapped and Mentally Disabled Association Johor Bahru home.