



Summer
Edition

carpenter's square

sjt youth magazine

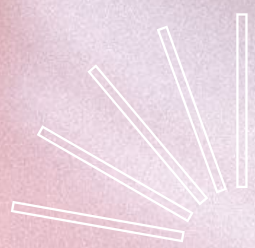


YOUTH EXPO

WYD LISBON



Welcome to our Summer edition of our youth magazine, covering content from recent gatherings, amongst other things. See inside this issue of *Carpenter's Square* for all youth & young adults events at St Joseph's Parish Takapuna.



CONTENTS

Core Retreat

Michael Kim

Life Nights

Romwell Ramos

World Youth Day Lisbon

From our pilgrims

Diocesan events

Patrikk Colita

Youth Expo @ Carmel

Kayla Gapultos

Glory Story

From one of our teens

Upcoming events

Summer 2023

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CORE RETREAT



"It was a good chance to reflect on ourselves and to make our hearts fertile ground for His words to take root in and flourish".

By Michael Kim



The Core Retreat took place over Matariki Weekend this year. Joining us for this retreat were many new leaders – nearly ten! These leaders themselves were Year 13's last year, and so were near the start of their youth ministry journey at St. Josephs.

The retreat was an amazing opportunity, not only for our new leaders to learn the ins and outs of our youth ministry, but also for the "old" to connect with the new while developing alongside them. We engaged in workshops on relational ministry and working as a team. There were also all sorts of bonding activities, alongside questions, answers and discussions to prepare the whole team for the challenges of dealing with an increasingly complicated youth.

Interwoven throughout was praise and worship led by our talented musical team, now greatly supported by a number of first-time Core members at this retreat. These experiences of praise and worship would bring us back to God, and ensured that we remained centered on Him, inspiring us to share his true presence with the youth of our parish and beyond.

School leaders from our local Rosmini and Carmel Colleges were also invited to fully participate alongside us, hoping to take what they experienced back to their school communities.



Overall, the events of the Core retreat took only a short time physically. We had just three days over Matariki weekend - but it was a crucial time to form the Core team into a formidable, cohesive force, leaving us with a lasting experience and refilling our spiritual batteries. It was a good chance to reflect on ourselves and to make our hearts fertile ground for His words to take root in and flourish.

LIFE NIGHTS

"Each gathering proved to be a comfort for the soul!"

by Romwell Ramos

Where do I start? The past few months have been full of amazing moments, where God's grace has created stories of encounter, joy, and friendship during our gatherings on a Friday evening.

Our Life Nights have been nothing short of extraordinary, with lots of different activities. The conclusion of this incredible year of ministry was marked by our latest series, 'More Than Flesh and Bones,' delving into the relationship between our body and soul. We explored practical ways to nurture our well-being, emphasizing the idea that stewardship begins with understanding. By doing things with purpose, we will see changes in how we think, speak, listen, and look - thereby helping us renew our minds. The final part beautifully concluded with heartfelt testimonies from two of our cherished teens, Dominik, and Joanna, whom we bid farewell to this year as they return to Poland.





Besides our series, we also hosted different nights just to hang out and have fun. From brain-stimulating Quiz Nights to friendly rounds of Laser Tag at Xtreme and intimate Bonfire Nights, each gathering proved to be a comfort for the soul!

One big highlight this year was teaming up with new friends from the Chinese Catholic Youth for 'Touched by The Spirit' – an evening dedicated to the Charisms of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Martin delivered a powerful message, and we had a worship band with individuals from both groups. Teaming up with new friends showed us how much we need each other and how our faith brings us together.

As we conclude this year. If you're a young person aged 13-17, I truly encourage you to join us next year. It's an opportunity for great fellowship and an encounter with God in a unique way with some cool people!



WORLD YOUTH DAY

"In fact, God welcomes the ones who are in need of him...."

by Tim Koo

Pilgrim diaries

During World Youth Day in Lisbon, lots of events were happening at the same time, everywhere in the city and we had to take public transport to get to these venues. I recall a time when I was leading the way for a small group of us, the bus had to stop on the way because the road was closed for another event.

I panicked and looked at the map to find another way to get there, a nearby church caught my eye. We decided to pay this church a visit. This church had beautiful stained glass windows depicting our Mother Mary and then I realized: God has led us here.

Before I had been called on this wonderful journey, I was too focused on developing my weaknesses: speaking out and preaching. Although they are very crucial to reach out to people and evangelize, I realized that speaking is not the only way to spread out the word of God.



St. Therese of Lisieux, a doctor of the church in her autobiography, 'Story of a Soul', and St. Joan of Arc have been respected by many people because of the devotion they showed towards their vocation. From the saints we encountered during the pilgrimage, I learned that it is also important to find out what I am good at and how I could use it to make the world shine with God's love.

If you have ever thought of going on a pilgrimage, then I want to encourage you by saying 'You have been called by God!'. You don't have to be saintlike to go on a pilgrimage. In fact, God welcomes more of the ones who are in need of him (just like myself). So please do not be afraid, but arise and go with haste!



WORLD YOUTH DAY

"One doesn't have to travel seven seas to encounter God - He is merely waiting for us to lean into Him wherever we are, physically and spiritually."

by Talitha Pereira



World Youth Day did not just meet my expectations, it exceeded them - especially in ways I least expected. Whilst we were there having such a mountain top experience, with 1.5 million young people - a real symphony of noise and colour, and the glory of God was revealed like in the Transfiguration, I found that God often grew me the most and spoke the loudest in the moments in between. He spoke in the conversations we had waiting for an event to begin, he spoke as we broke open His Word in small groups, he spoke even in the silence of Adoration seeing him kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face).

This reminded me that one doesn't have to travel seven seas to encounter God - he is merely waiting for us to lean into Him wherever we are, physically and spiritually.

I had a Peter moment when I wanted to stay at the top of the mountain and set up an Airbnb, but it's back down in everyday life with our everyday people that God calls us to be the greatest witness.



Amidst the vibrant tapestry of World Youth Day, a chance encounter with a young Ukrainian woman rejuvenated my faith in the power of God. I did not expect someone from Ukraine, out of all places, to boost my faith. She shared that whilst she and her friends were praying together at World Youth Day, a bomb dropped into her hometown, but against all possibilities, it did not explode! Hearing this from a young person who had every reason to be in despair as her country faces war but still chose to be perseverant in her faith was a big encouragement for me in my own faith journey.

Sometimes our faith in the power of God can be drowned out by hopelessness and even just daily mundane rhythms, but dear reader, God is still alive and working even in the spaces we least expect!



WORLD YOUTH DAY

"Don't leave God on read! It may seem easier to ignore where God is pulling you towards but don't miss that opportunity."

by Jana Vicente

A first-time European tourist like myself could rattle on about every incredible moment from our recent pilgrimage. But if I had to cut it down to one highlight, I would choose how we had endless opportunities to meet people from every country. I didn't know it myself, but I found the best ways to meet people were the most unconventional ways. Bonding over drink bottle showers in the 40-degree heat or getting suffocated in an overcrowded metro invited conversations to hear about very unusual norms in different cultures and discover what it's like to be a Catholic in different countries. Conversations always seemed to be so easygoing as we all had at least one thing in common - God!



I found myself seeing the presence of God in so many people. But if I had to pinpoint the place where I truly felt God speaking to me, it was the first day exploring Lisbon. After some long, humid days in a small town in Portugal, you could say that I felt my love for the pilgrimage almost diminishing. But walking around the streets of Portugal, I couldn't help but notice my last name, Vicente, pop up everywhere - which we later find out is because São Vicente (Saint Vincent) is the ancient patron saint of Lisbon. That true sense of belonging struck me at this moment and allowed me to recollect God's call to experience this pilgrimage journey. Getting caught up in worldly problems has often gotten the best of me.

But after this experience, I went on to let go of my complaints about the weather, our communal showers and the lack of walls in our accommodation to reform my role as a young person in the Church - my purpose as a youth leader and my passion to drive where the Church of today is headed. Taking this experience into my personal life, I've learned to understand how God is present even in unfortunate events in our everyday lives. Whether it be finding joy in waiting at your third consecutive red light or, for me, when I sat down to use my brand new pocket radio to listen to the Pope's words, only to find that I've forgotten to put in some batteries.

But nevertheless, I've learned to listen when God calls. For all you future pilgrims, I like to always think of this analogy - Don't leave God on read! It may seem easier to ignore where God is pulling you towards but don't miss that opportunity. Now that you know you're being called to embark on the upcoming pilgrimage, I do have one piece of advice: the packing list means you pack what's on the list. Ignoring "useless" things on that list was my downfall, but, knowing this next generation, you will all be set and ready to seek Jesus in Korea.



WORLD YOUTH DAY

"That special connection hinted to me a universal church, a family to which I truly belong."

by Joseph Pham

"Be joyful and Do not be afraid!" These words from Pope Francis continue to echo in my heart until today.

Can you imagine you are now in the midst of 1.5 million young people who come from different countries, cultures, backgrounds and speak different languages but somehow you feel connected because everyone knows what they all believe and what they are there for - the loving God. It could be overwhelming and unrealistic to imagine that scene but it is real and it was exactly how I experienced and felt when I was at World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon. During my pilgrimage, I encountered so many people ["strangers" - I would say] but they seemed like my brothers and sisters. and encouraged me to go forward to live out my faith and share it with other people.

It was so easy to start a conversation with anyone who was passing by. That special connection hinted to me a universal church, a family which I truly belong. Smiling, laughing, dancing and singing surrounded me that made my heart beat faster with joy and encouragement. I felt comfortable, and safe. Pope Francis asked me and all other pilgrims to take the message "Be joyful and don't be afraid!" to your family, friends and our local parishes. He said, "It's not me but God who looks into your eyes and knows what is in your heart... so, trust in God and go forth with haste." I pray that those words from our Pope also encourages you and sets you out to live your life to the full.



DIOCESAN EVENTS^{*}

"It felt like we were one big community, all walking together and following the path the Lord has laid out for us."

by Patrikk Colita

Masterclass

I had a very pleasurable time attending a Masterclass event held by ACYM. We were greeted warmly as we entered the session and were given our notebook and pen to take notes. There was also plenty of food and drinks to go around. This particular session was centered around the life cycle of a youth leadership group, from formation to growing a team. One major takeaway from the session was how to approach and resolve conflict that arises within the team. They highlighted the importance of open communication and providing a safe space so that individuals are able to talk about issues with one another without fear of being judged or feeling like they won't be heard.



Another highlight from this session was the music and worship band. It helped my mind to focus and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room. It helped set the scene for the talk that followed. It was also amazing to see so many youth leaders from all over Auckland come together to be fed, not only physically but spiritually as well. It felt like we were one big community, all walking together and following the path the Lord has laid out for us. I highly recommend attending these sessions to not only feed oneself, but also to feel a sense of community and to help us grow personally so that we are better able to serve our youth group and lead them closer to Christ.

CARMEL COLLEGE YOUTH EXPO

"Being part of youth, gave me a loving community to be a part of and where I could let my burdens go, by growing in my relationship with Christ."
by Kayla Gapultos

In the month of August, it was amazing to have our incredible team be back at Carmel College and host another successful youth expo!

For this expo, I had the privilege of playing in the Worship Band led by our wonderful Talitha and Audrey (an old Carmel girl from a different Youth group), which occurred in the school theater during lunchtime. It's a funny story, but most of the worship band consisted of people I didn't know and who didn't know each other, but in the end, we all managed to create a wonderful and emotional atmosphere with our instruments!



As an old Carmel girl myself, walking in through the school doors felt very nostalgic as flashbacks from last year came into my mind when I got to experience this expo as a student myself. Now that I'm in the core team at our youth and this time I am serving the students, my eyes have been opened to the dedication and commitment that our youth group brings to serve the teens and lead them closer to Christ.

Returning to Carmel and providing the service that was once given to me as a student was a heart-warming and humbling experience. During my time at Carmel, joining St. Joseph's Youth was one of the best things that has ever happened to me, as it gave me a loving community to be a part of and where I could let my burdens go by growing in my relationship with Christ. Because of this, I want the students from Carmel to experience what I experienced when I was their age and seeing us providing them an opportunity to join us makes me happy and fulfilled.

Ever since the Carmel Expo, the number of people in youth has drastically increased, proof of this expo's success. Good job team!



GLORY STORY

"I was welcomed with open arms and a warm heart."

by Shanie Fuller

Youth group has been my highlight every fortnight. I was welcomed with open arms and a warm heart from the very start. My favorite event that happened this year was camp which was held in early January, which opened my eyes to an entirely different perspective plus also being able to build a friendship with comfort and acceptance. During Camp, we had praise and worship every night, which was my highlight. We also participated in small group sessions where we got to know each other better, while side by side learning more about God and growing closer to him. I truly felt supported by the entire youth group, and I will always carry the memories of those nights and the people I met with me. Youth Camp definitely created a major impact on my life positively, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity I was given to experience it.



ON THE HORIZON

Upcoming Events





”Rejoice in the
Lord
always”



**Summer
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