



OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A REVIEW OF LIFE

Leaders of Catholic charities learnt and practised an approach to formation and fulfilling their social mission at the recent Caritas Singapore Members' Forum.



During the Forum, Reverend Father Patrick Goh encouraged member groups to be realistic in their planning and remember that all of us are called to work in community and collectively, and with a Christian reflection and perspective – to see, judge and act as Jesus would.

More than 90 members from 19 Catholic social and community groups gathered in June at the annual Caritas Singapore Members' Forum.

They learnt more about "Review of Life" (ROL), a method and instrument of formation, and how it can help them in the work they do for their many beneficiaries.

ROL is a review of our individual lives and action, and begins with an objective analysis of the reality each of us experiences in the light of the life of Jesus and the teachings of the Church. It demands a personal and collective transformation. In short, we "see, judge and act".

Reverend Father Patrick Goh, who facilitated the session, gave an overview about the life and work of

Joseph Cardijn, who is credited with bringing about a new awareness of the power of the ministry of the laity in the Church.

Cardijn saw no separation between ordinary life and religious life. For him, "religion is the whole of life which, like the host, should be consecrated to God". He believed that private devotion and prayers are not enough and that faith must be put into action. "Faith without works is dead."

He noted that lay people could change the world by living as Christians in the world. Cardijn shared that the laity are formed not by books but by the discovery of facts followed by Christian judgments which in turn results in action being taken and done effectively.

Caritas Singapore deputy chairman George Lim shared

that "part of the Catholic Social Teaching is to help people of faith to interpret the signs of the time".

Reverend Father Patrick Goh emphasised that ROL is not seeing things in a simplistic or superficial manner or judging in a moralistic way. It requires long-term planning and not spontaneous acts. It is not just action and work but it has to bring about a change in people and structure, and strives to identify and eliminate the causes.

He encouraged member groups who serve the disadvantaged in society to be realistic in their planning and to keep in mind that although not every-one is equally gifted, all of us are called to work in community and collectively, and with a Christian reflection and perspective – to see, judge and act as Jesus would.

Among the participants was Brother Emmanuel Gaudette, chairman of Catholic Welfare Services. He said: "I thought the forum was a splendid one that captured the attention and interest of every one of the participants. I have practised that method for a long time and have found it very efficient and salutary. However one has to be cautious as not to use it incorrectly. To be effective it should be Christ-based."

Another participant, Mr Michael Png, president of Catholic AIDS Response Effort, described what struck him most: "We need to involve our beneficiaries more in our efforts to help them live better lives. Give them the means or remove obstacles to them being able to live that life, rather than making decisions on their behalf, based on what we think is good for them."

Three new Catholic Charities

They will focus on the disabled, mentally ill and overseas humanitarian aid

AS part of its community strategy to broaden the Church's outreach, Caritas Singapore has been rolling out various charitable initiatives with its member organisations.

At the June meeting of the Senate of Priests, Caritas Singapore provided an update of its community strategy and briefed the Senate on plans underway to form three new charitable groups for the disabled, mentally ill and overseas humanitarian aid.

The first group on the disabled, yet un-named, will provide social service programmes aimed at those with acquired or congenital motor disabilities as well as their family and caregivers. Its focus will be on training, skills development and integration of beneficiaries into the community.

The second group on the mentally ill is called CLARITY and will seek to help those with psychiatric illness. Its focus will be to provide rehabilitation, support and essential training to help people from low to middle-income families recover from and manage their psychiatric illnesses, so that they can find a sustainable and meaningful livelihood.

The third group on overseas humanitarian aid will be an expansion of the work of the Archdiocesan Crisis Coordination Team (ACCT) which will now be renamed to CHARIS, acronym for Caritas Humanitarian Aid and Relief Initiatives, Singapore. The focus of CHARIS will extend beyond disasters to include other forms of adverse circumstances which require humanitarian aid. It will function as the coordinating and support body for the many parish and archdiocesan groups performing overseas humanitarian work. It will be launched officially by Archbishop Nicholas Chia on August 20.

Watch this space for more information on the three groups.

action plans to respond to the issues.

Participants focused on building a common vision in developing action plans and prioritising areas of collaboration and service for their respective organisations.

Ultimately, whether the organisation is able to stand out as an effective Christian social ministry will depend if they are able to point their beneficiaries, the society and one another to the love of God – what we call their "Sign Value".

Caritas Leadership Retreat 2010

Can you spot a Christian leader amongst a group of leaders? What are the qualities of a Christian leader?

WITH the objective of wanting the leaders to deepen their understanding of the Catholic social ministry and Christian leadership,

Caritas Singapore organised an overseas retreat at Batam for 33 leaders of 16 member organisations. It was facilitated by Christina Kheng and Sister Maria Lau.

"Ohana" means "family" and family means no one gets left behind. Introducing this at the very start of the retreat, the focus was that we are part of one large

family. Our work may be diverse, but we are in this together and there is so much support we can give each other. We are one family in Christ, and should be working for the common good, caring for one another.

We are all involved in the Church's social mission, which is the mission of Christ in building the Kingdom of God on earth. This "Kingdom" is the community of one body which upholds the dignity of the human person. Building it means paying

attention to the most neglected, promoting charity and addressing issues of justice. Basically, it means self-giving in God's love, guided by faith and working in hope.

To build anything, we need the necessary tools and in building God's Kingdom, tools are the Catholic Social Teachings and the Review of Life methodology. These help Christian leaders to assess the issues in their work, reflect on how Jesus would respond to the issues and help develop concrete