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SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2007

SINGAPORE 50 CENTS / WEST MALAYSIA RM\$1.20

M.I.C.A.(P) No. 050 / 01 / 2007

PPS 201 / 5 / 2008

Vol 57

No. 18

"We count on you to make a difference in the world!"



Lay people encouraged to play major role to make the world a better place by being witnesses of Gospel values

SINGAPORE – We are living in challenging times and the church counts on lay people to make a difference in the world, said Archbishop Nicholas Chia to all Catholics in Singapore in a message read after Mass during the Aug 18-19 weekend to mark Lay Apostolate Sunday:

"Everyday we have news of conflict, of the widening gap between rich and poor, and of families coming under stress," he said. "In these times the church is called to be a sign to the world.

We are called to be witnesses through our Gospel values so that, hopefully, things will change for the better."

"Lay people in particular have a major role to play because you live and work side by side with people in all walks of life," he reminded the congregation. "You can influence others through your God-centred decisions and actions. Indeed, we count on you to make a difference in the world!"

Lay Apostolate Sunday is to remind us – priests and lay people alike – of the importance of and role of laity in the mission of the church, Archbishop Chia explained. "I hope that our celebration of Lay Apostolate Sunday in the Archdiocese of

Singapore will help achieve this, by binding you closer as a community, strengthening your sense of mission and giving you the wisdom and grace to make a difference wherever you are."

While I encourage you to participate, to go out and help those in need, I would like to remind you that volunteering is but a small part of being a lay apostle and living our social mission, he added. "As a lay apostle, you should be manifesting the message of Christ in everything you do in your life, and make a difference in big and small ways with those around you."

"Go out and be the salt of the earth and light of the world!" the archbishop encouraged.

A booklet titled "Live Our Faith – Love and Serve" was published by the Catholic Social and Community Council to provide an insight into the lay apostolate and to highlight the church's social teachings.

The booklet, which was given free to all families, includes stories of people who are involved in apostolate work, information about the Catholic social organizations in Singapore, and volunteering opportunities with them.

In addition, the Catholic Social and Community Council will be organizing a series of volunteer fairs in many parishes across the archdiocese in September to encourage more participation. □

LITURGY: 40 YEARS AFTER VATICAN II Page 20