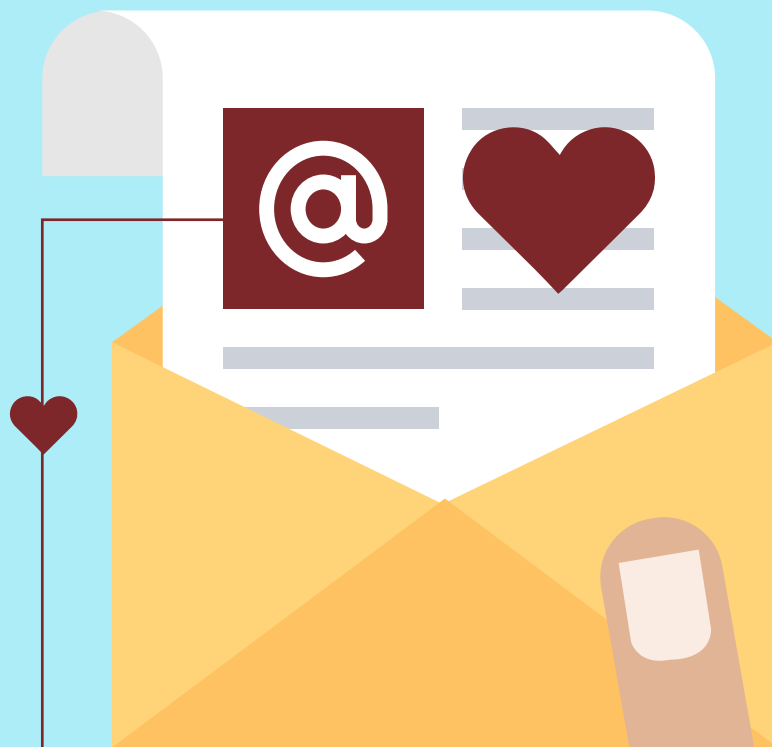


Caritas in Mission

A quarterly newsletter by Caritas Singapore on the Catholic Church's social mission

Issue 02 June 2020

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MAILBOX





The Question of Location



Dear Friends,

In the Bible, we find the importance of **location** explained in terms of building and planting. For example, Jesus says to his disciples, *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock* (Matthew 7:24-25, NRSV). And the psalmist tells us that those *whose delight is in the law of the Lord... are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither* (Psalm 1:3).

These verses highlight the **benefits** arising from the right location. From being built on the solid rock of the *Word-Made-Flesh*. From being planted by the running stream flowing from the pierced side of the Crucified and Risen One. At these spiritual places, not only is it possible to experience peace in the face of the fiercest storm, one also receives power to bear the precious fruit of healing and wholeness for others to enjoy.

But more than just benefits, what we also find in these verses is something we might call **integrity**. For, at the right location, what is built is not just a pile of bricks, but a solid house. What is planted is not just a gathering of roots and branches, or leaves and fruit, but a sturdy tree. What is cultivated is not just a collection of disparate experiences and activities – even

apparently pious ones – but an integrated and meaningful life. A truly human existence, energised by the breath of the Spirit, and empowered to share with others the love of God made visible in Christ.

Within this horizon, words like **faith** and **social service** each take on a particular meaning. No longer do they indicate separate realities – each complete in itself – that we need to somehow bring together. They point instead to aspects of an organic whole, apart from which each loses its proper Christian significance. Is this not why it is written that *faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead* (James 2:17)? *And, if I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing* (1 Corinthians 13:3)?

But, if this is true, then perhaps instead of questioning the relationship between faith and social service, what we need even more is to **allow Jesus to question us**, as he does *Simon Peter: Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? ... Feed my lambs* (John 21:15). If we were indeed to submit ourselves to the Lord's questioning, what might our response be? And what steps might we be moved to take as a result, so as to arrive at our proper *location* today?

Blessings,
Chris, SJ



Supporting the Community during this Pandemic



Our social mission continues

COVID-19 has posed unprecedented challenges and disruption globally, and has birthed negative financial, psychological, and social impact on our brothers and sisters. It has caused a gearshift in the way we engage, communicate, and stay connected within the community.

With enhanced restrictions and guidelines during the Circuit Breaker, most centres were closed and staff were working from home.

The Caritas Singapore family tapped on creative tools to ensure that we continue our mission to support those who require help during this difficult time.





Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ACMI)

ACMI rallied the help of the Catholic community to support the needs of migrants and the transnational families. They distributed masks, cleaning agents, hand sanitisers and care packs at the dormitories. Their helpline remained open to provide mental and emotional support to the migrant community.

Staff and befrienders of the Skills Development ministry reached out to employers and their helpers to encourage open communication and strengthening of employer-employee relationships. There were also home-based learning assignments for enrolled students.

Couples for Christ, Singapore (CFC) and ACMI held an Abundant and Better Life Abroad programme (AbBA) to keep in touch and pray with migrant participants. They also set up a multilingual Sunday prayer hotline as well.

"We are grateful that even during the Circuit Breaker, there are people out there who still reach out to us. God Bless you!"

- Didi, Foreign Spouse

ACMI aims to help migrants in Singapore meet their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs. Their ministry includes Case Management and Pastoral Care, Skills Development, Community Outreach and Formation.

As most After-School Care Centres stopped operating during the Circuit Breaker, **Morning Star's** team of facilitators has been meeting online every day to keep their morale high and plan lessons.

Parents helped get children engaged with weekly e-lessons, which included art and craft, storytelling, and physical exercise. The children were always very enthusiastic about the e-lessons. Facilitators also took this opportunity to check in on the children during these sessions.

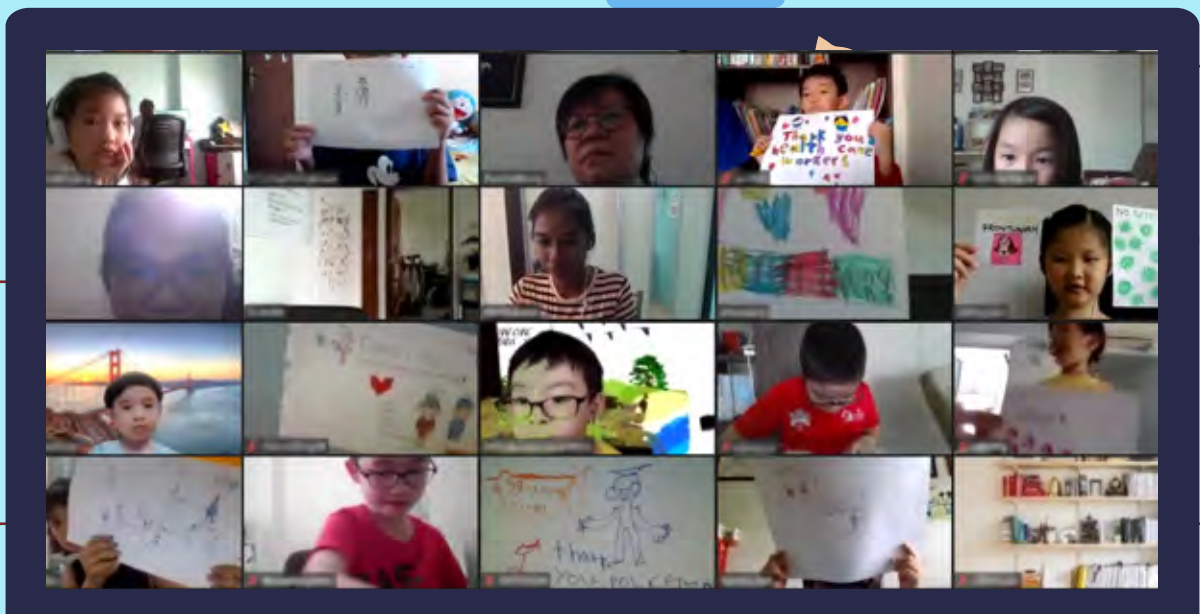
Two of Morning Star's centres remained open during the Circuit Breaker for parents who are working in essential services. All of Morning Star's centres have resumed operations since Phase 1 of the post-circuit breaker period.

"I'm fortunate that the care centre is open to take care of Ethan during the day when I am at work so that he can do his home-based learning. As a single parent, it's really a blessing that they are still operating.

Ethan gets to join the e-meetings with the other children, and he really enjoys meeting his friends on Zoom. He would be very disappointed if he missed a session with them!"

– Mr Ang, parent of Ethan

Morning Star Community Services focuses on enriching and strengthening family relationships in Singapore.



Morning Star Community Services



Photo taken before the Circuit Breaker.



Mount Alvernia Hospital

Mount Alvernia Hospital received patients from public hospitals who had mild symptoms and also recovering from COVID-19. This served to ease the crunch in public hospitals.

Mount Alvernia's dedicated space to care for COVID-19 patients followed stringent security measures and NCID-guided infection control protocols for patients' recovery and to also keep the hospital community safe. Additional measures included limiting the number of visitors, wearing masks, and social distancing at waiting areas.

As part of staff care, Mount Alvernia's non-medical teams worked from home where possible.

"We are very heartened to see everyone at Mount Alvernia Hospital work together to make the adjustments during the Circuit Breaker as these measures are important to keep everyone safe and help the nation win the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic."

– Mount Alvernia Hospital

Mount Alvernia is Singapore's first private and only not-for-profit Catholic acute tertiary care hospital. They provide compassionate and holistic healthcare to serve all with love.

Clarity Singapore shifted their services to tele/video therapy, group video psychotherapy and support to ensure continuity of services.

Most of their clients embraced these service changes and enjoyed the convenience and time saved on travelling while still receiving the necessary support.

Clarity Singapore was encouraged to see the good response to online workshops. They have also been seeing the public seeking mental health support despite remote services.

While tele/video therapy offers convenience, there are challenges to therapeutic interventions for mental health issues that require direct contact and presence. Clarity Singapore is adjusting and learning as they continue to adapt to the change.

"We applaud all our clients who have braved the change and continue to seek support in these difficult times."

– Clarity Singapore

Clarity Singapore aims to provide rehabilitation, support and essential training to help anyone, aged 16 years and above, struggling with mental health conditions.

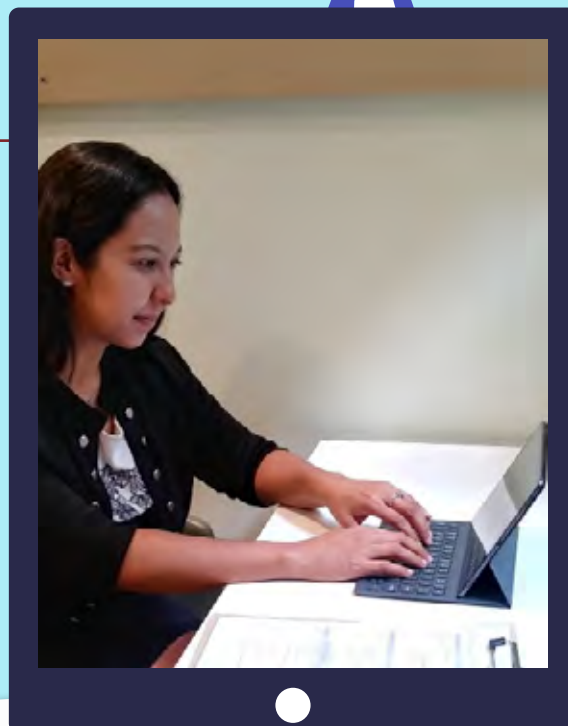
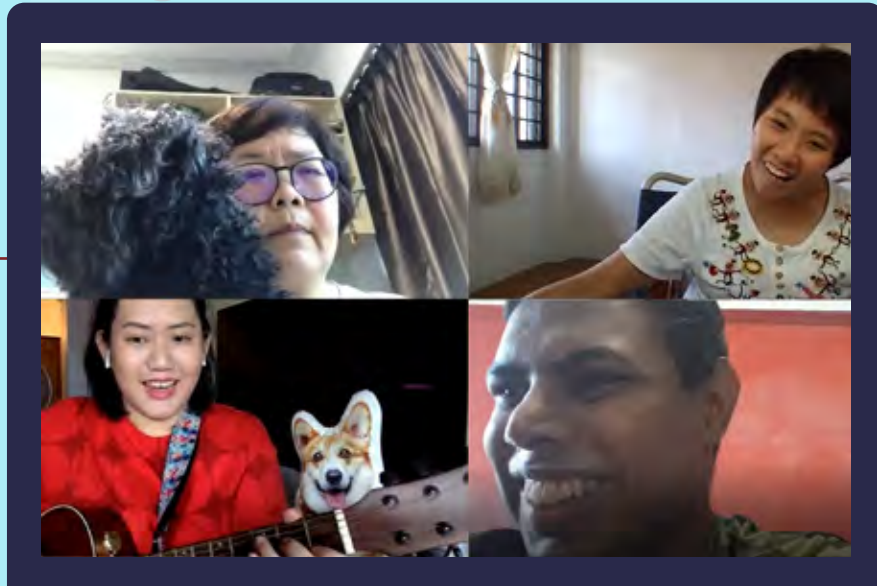


Photo taken before the Circuit Breaker.

Clarity Singapore



Abilities Beyond Limitations and Expectations (ABLE)

ABLE started on their tele-rehabilitation services immediately, conducting more than 250 sessions in April and May.

The ABLE team innovated using tele- and video conferencing tools to offer rehabilitation therapy, music and art therapy, as well as care and support for caregivers.

They also delivered individual care packages to clients for their use for tele-music therapy and art therapy sessions. This participation helped clients stay connected, express themselves, and deal with difficult emotions.

ABLE's drivers were on hand for private hire clients with disabilities to keep their dialysis appointments.

ABLE also launched a "Tele-Kopi" programme as a structured support group for caregivers.

"Caregivers like myself appreciate the support given by ABLE. Through the 'Tele-Kopi' sessions, we get to connect with other caregivers and share our experiences. Hearing the real-life stories shared by other caregivers gives us a sense of comfort and strength."

- Mrs Jane Koe, Caregiver

ABLE supports persons with disabilities and their caregivers through a holistic suite of services such as rehabilitation and training, respite care and wheelchair accessible transport.

Business activities of law practices, with the exception of urgent and essential matters, had to be suspended during the circuit breaker.

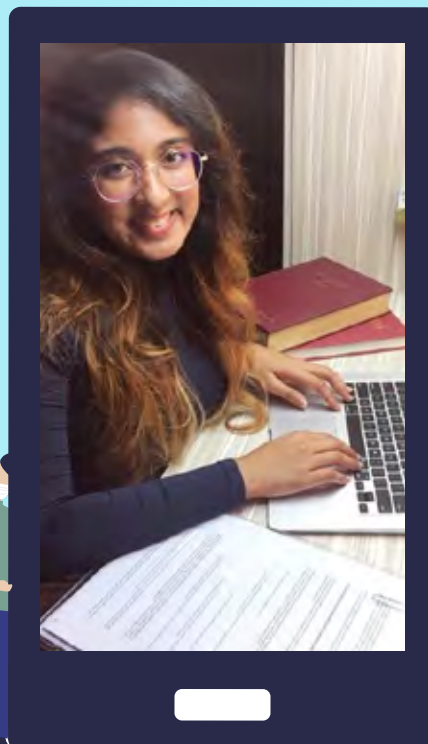
Tapping on technology, the **Catholic Lawyers Guild** continued their Pro-Bono Legal Clinics.

Volunteer lawyers rendered legal advice via tele-consultation and the administrative team supported clients via the Catholic Lawyers Guild's hotline and contact email.

"Naturally, everyone required time easing into work-from-home operations. Clients were receptive to virtual meetings as it was the next best practical alternative. With the gradual implementation of the post-circuit breaker phases, I remain hopeful that some form of normalcy will return in time to come. In the interim, we will have to get accustomed to 'the new normal'."

– Lucella Maria Lucias Jeraled,
Trainee Lawyer,
and Assistant Secretary at the Catholic Lawyers Guild

The Catholic Lawyers Guild (CLG) provides mutual support and encouragement among lawyers for the sanctification of their professional work, as well as the provision of legal assistance to the church and persons in need.



Catholic Lawyers Guild



Events / Helpline



August

14

FRI

**CARITAS SINGAPORE
ROUNDTABLE:
HEAL OUR HOME**

🕒 10:00am 📍 Online

Register Registration opens 13 July 2020

✉️ healourhome@caritas-singapore.org

Follow us to stay updated

@CaritasSingapore
www.caritas-singapore.org/Heal-our-home/

This roundtable is part of our efforts to raise awareness about global climate emergency, causes and impact of climate change in Singapore, and what individuals and organisations can do to address climate change.

CARITAS SINGAPORE HELPLINE

In line with government guidelines, the Caritas Singapore family continues to do our best to support people in need, especially the poor and vulnerable.

If you need help, or you know someone who needs help, please call our helpline:



8375 3125

We're here for you.

Visit caritas-singapore.org/covid-19-update for more information



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Wish to receive an e-copy of this newsletter? Write to us at comms@caritas-singapore.org

CONTACT US

📍 55 Waterloo Street #08-01 Catholic Centre S187954

📱 @CaritasSingapore

🌐 caritas-singapore.org

☎️ 6338 3448

✉️ comms@caritas-singapore.org