



# OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## A new logo for Caritas Singapore

Caritas Singapore is the social arm of the Catholic Church in Singapore and, together with our 23 affiliate member organisations, touches the lives of more than 50,000 beneficiaries of all races and religions.

We are also a member of Caritas Internationalis which has its headquarters in Rome and is an international confederation of 165 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations. Inspired by the Catholic faith, Caritas Internationalis is the helping hand and heart of the Church – reaching out to the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race or religion, to build a

world based on justice and fraternal love. Caritas means charity in Latin.

Caritas is changing our logo to be consistent with and be part of the Caritas Internationalis confederation which has a strong online presence worldwide which we can tap on to strengthen our branding.



New Logo

Caritas Singapore is taking on the international Caritas logo comprising three elements - the Caritas Cross, the Caritas name and the region name of Singapore. The flaming Caritas Cross symbolises Christ's burning love for His people. This expression forms the core of the work done



Old Logo

by Caritas Singapore and its affiliates.

Caritas Singapore chairman Janet Ang said: "We believe that the international Caritas identity will help to enhance Caritas Singapore's visibility as a member of the worldwide confederation. It will also allow us to leverage on the network and share experiences on overseas humanitarian work."

Executive director Bernadette Lau added: "Accountability is an indispensable aspect in the service of Charity. The Caritas network provides the platform for sharing best practices in management standards and financial accountability, ethics and governance."

## Volunteering as an act of faith

*There are many needs in our Church and among the groups we help. If you have time to spare, come join our dedicated Catholic volunteers and make a difference in the community.*

It was Advent, 2006, and the newly formed Caritas Singapore needed volunteers to count cash donations. When word got out, Madeleine Quek, a parishioner of the Church of the Holy Family, responded. "I was retired and had nothing much to do. So when a friend called me up to help, I helped. I was just grateful to be able to contribute in the social mission of the Church and to use my experience in banking to help the poor."

She continued as a volunteer and helped process appeal envelopes during Charities Week, the annual archdiocesan fundraising campaign organised by Caritas Singapore. Since then, she has become leader-coordinator for each Charities Week and plans the schedules of the counting teams.

Madeleine has helped out at many other Caritas Singapore events over the years, such as the biennial Social Mission Conference and Down Memory Lane Charity Dinner 2013. She brings together a team to pack Caritas Singapore's annual reports each year. More recently, she packed goodie bags for the Caritas Singapore Golf for Charity and mobilised her support team to help manage the goodie bags and lucky draw prizes.

When CHARIS needed help to tally up donations in the aftermath of the Nepal

earthquake this year, the volunteers responded enthusiastically.

Madeleine, 68, and married with two grown up sons, aged 43 and 36, said: "People volunteering for these important tasks give of their time with so much love. We joke and laugh and we learn from one another. We try to be sensitive and flexible and conscious of one another's needs. Looking back over the years, I have grown to love my volunteers as my family."

Esther Poh, 55, a housewife with three children, is a parishioner of the Church of St Mary of the Angels and joined Madeleine's team in 2012. Describing Madeleine as a humble and patient leader who treats everyone equally, she said: "This is a very nice team...not the gossip-gossip type. We all love what we do and whenever Charities Week comes to an end, everyone feels very sad that we are 'out of a job' again," she said.

Esther also assists in administrative work for Caritas Singapore. Over the past 20 years, she has volunteered at several other places including soup kitchens, a seniors' home as well as in schools. But none compares with her experience at Caritas Singapore. "Even the coins get counted with love," she said. "And we get nice notes from people, including children who draw pictures and put them into the



Madeleine (in blue) and Esther (back row seated in green) collating conference packs for the Caritas Singapore Social Mission Conference 2014.

Charities Week appeal envelopes together with their savings. It's very encouraging. So I do my part when I see such generosity."

She hopes more volunteers will come forward to serve at Caritas Singapore. Citing the Chinese saying, *you qian chu qian, you li chu li*, she said: "Those who can give money, give money. Those who have the energy, give the energy."

After almost a decade of volunteering with Caritas Singapore, Madeleine says the experience has been memorable and the lasting friendships she has made with fellow volunteers have been most precious. "It opened up my world to many other aspects of life that I would never have known if not for the people who shared how they got through their trauma and experiences. It has been very heart-warming, edifying and faith enriching," she said.

### Principle of Solidarity

In the Church's social teachings, the simple acts of helping and volunteering are a commitment to solidarity with our brothers and sisters. Solidarity is not a "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all"... One's neighbour is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbour must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 193, 196)

### Agape Village is opening soon!

Caritas Singapore is calling for volunteers to help with the many exciting volunteering opportunities available at Agape Village, the Catholic Church's one-stop help centre located at Lorong 8, Toa Payoh. For more information on volunteering opportunities there, please contact Raymond Yong at [raymond@caritas-singapore.org](mailto:raymond@caritas-singapore.org).