



# Centennial Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima @ Assumption Pathway School



On Thursday, 14 September 2017, I was very blessed to be able to accompany my daughter, Christa Ann, together with about 75 girls from all levels, parents/grandmothers, teachers, staff and Mrs Margaret Tan to Assumption Pathway School at Bukit Timah, to attend a prayer session with the Centennial Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima. It was a private event because only Catholic schools in the west and north districts were invited. The Marian statue was one of the six blessed by Pope Francis which are making their way to the different continents in the world, bearing the message of prayer and penance.

On that cool rainy afternoon, we all gathered rather excitedly in the primary school canteen before boarding two buses that headed towards Assumption Pathway School. Mrs Tan was visibly delighted to see all the parents/grandmothers who had signed up for the visit with their daughters/grand daughters and greeted all of us with her usual warmth.

Upon arrival at the Assumption Pathway School, we were greeted by excited and welcoming smiles of the staff of the school, who were present as we alighted from the bus. We were ushered into the school hall, where many other boys and girls from the other catholic schools were already seated.

The feeling I had at that moment was very surreal because besides the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, there was a screen just behind our lady with moving clouds, the sky and sun. I was filled with a sense of deep joy and peace upon seeing Our Lady and the joyous strains of the choir singing "Ave, Ave, Ave Maria" just added to the atmosphere. 'Hail Mary full of grace' could not be a more suitable salutation for our Lady because from where I was standing, which was quite near the statue, I could see our Lady looking back at me with those eyes that just spoke volumes about how much she cared for and loved us. Everything is GRACE.



We were very blessed as this was a private event and we were all seated very close to the statue of Our Lady. We had full view of her in all her splendour, surrounded by beautiful flowers and at the foot of Our Lady, the pictures of the two hearts of Jesus and Mary. Shortly after another school arrived and we started to recite the rosary. It was so nice to see many of the children whipping out their rosaries and their small fingers moving over the beads. Following that, more hymns were sang in honour of our Mother.



A Brother from Assumption Pathway then took over and explained to the children why the Statue of Our Lady was in Singapore and about the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal from May through October 1917, to three shepherd children and the message of Our Lady. Her requests repeatedly to the children were for: prayer; reparation; repentance; sacrifice and abandonment of sin.

For me, I thought Our Lady was really far sighted! Why? Because 100 years ago she already knew that the world we live in today would really need of a lot of prayers, reparation and repentance with all the terrorist acts and other atrocities happening around the globe. We do live in challenging times and we to ask our Lady of Fatima to continue to pray for and with us.



Next, we had children represent their schools to bring up the petition boxes to Our Lady. Christa was given the privilege to take all our petitions up to Our Lady. Our box, albeit small, was filled to the brim with petitions - Mother Mary please intercede for us!

This was a rather emotional moment for me...seeing Christa walking up with that petition box because about 3 years ago, Christa had been diagnosed with cancer just before her 8th birthday and Mother Mary was my spiritual mother whom I prayed to for her intercession when the going was tough during that roller coaster ride of our lives. She was always interceding for Christa and my family and by God's grace, Christa went through her chemotherapy and radiotherapy as well as can be and she has been in remission since. One week prior to the visit, we had just received good news that her MRI and CT scans (done during the September holidays) were all good and she has cleared her 3 year mark. And as she was walking up, I knew she was (and still is) my walking, talking miracle, and without Our Lady's intercession, she would not be holding onto that petition box and doing her bit by presenting all our petitions to our dear mother, our intercessor!



Our visit ended on a sweet note of praise and thanksgiving to Our Lady and many, many photos taken with our Lady of Fatima!

When I got home that day, Christa showed me a picture she had taken of a notice next to the statue which read - "Please do not touch her, she will touch you." So tongue-in-cheek, but so true...Our Mother has touched many during her visit to Singapore. The number of people who had turned up at the masses, confessions and vigils were just overwhelming and according to Fr Simon Pereira at one lunchtime mass I attended, he said that many are returning to the church because of our Mother. Praise be to God!

*Sandy Lye mother of Christa Ann Lye (P5 Lily)*



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*"Please Do Not Touch Her, She Will Touch You."*



My initial encounter with the Lady was a puzzling one. When most of the chat groups I was a part of started sending the schedule of various prayer sessions taking place all over Singapore, I knew something big was going to happen. The fact that Mother Mary was a prominent part of this event was unquestionable because her image was present every time some information about the event was shared. But I didn't have a clear idea of what was really going to take place. So when the CHIJ Primary (Toa Payoh) Pastoral Care group invited parents to Assumption Pathway School for a prayer session with the Centennial Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima, I didn't think twice. I quickly clicked on the link, but did not fully understand what I had signed my daughter and myself up for.



Thursday, 14 Sep noon, two bus loads of IJ girls and their guardians made their way to the Assumption Pathway School and our excitement was building up as we walked the long corridors, following the directions of the ushers. We heard Marian hymns playing as we entered the large school hall. Then at the centre of the stage, I saw the Centennial Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima.

Mixed emotions filled me as we were led to our seats. Being at such a close distance from the Image, I finally figured out why Singaporean Catholics were overjoyed to be in her presence. Notwithstanding the beauty and intricate details of the sculpture, our Lady gracefully welcomed us with her open arms; her Immaculate Heart ready as ever to intercede for us.



The prayer session started with a short video of the Centennial Celebration of Our Lady of Fatima. It gave a glimpse to the background as to why the six statues had been commissioned by Pope Francis and are currently travelling around the world. In the week-long celebration in Singapore, Holy Masses, Candlelight Processions, Prayers and Reflections - almost round the clock - were held to commemorate her appearance 100 years ago in Fatima to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco.



As we made our journey back to school, the biggest take away for me is the feeling of humility- how God touched the sinner in me, through the Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima. Her message to the world then, remains relevant to the world today- "Sin no more, pray and do penance. Say the Rosary every day. Go to Mass and Confessions." May Our Lady of Fatima touch your heart, as she had touched all of us who were there with her that afternoon.

Following the recitation of the Rosary, prayer petitions from the schools in attendance were presented and consecrated to the two hearts of Jesus and Mary. At the end of our short session with the Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima, I was amazed that such a modest image can move believers.



*Candy Sari mother of Fransiska Cayla Setiadi (P2 Rose)*

