

Iter Nostrum

CASS Alumni

Christmas Edition 2010



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~"What Christmas 2010 means to you"

~Review of pilgrimage to Carmelites

What does Christmas 2010 mean to you?



"Christmas is a time for me to reflect on my relationship with God. As 2010 is coming to an end, it is the moment when I ask myself how much does God mean to me and what have I done to respond to His love. While listening to the classic song, 'I'll be Home for Christmas', I am pleased to share the joy of this festive season with my family. This happiness melts my heart and gives me warmth during this cold season overseas. I wish my fellows at CASS a merry Christmas and may God continue to shine over you at this celebration." ~**Jessica Leung**

"Christmas in 2010 will be our first Christmas as a new family and as parents. It will be a very busy and tiring Christmas but it will definitely also be the most rewarding. We are so Blessed and honoured to be able to partake in God's wonderful miracle of creation, the giving of life. Christmas in 2010 for us is all about understanding, embracing and being a part of this gift – Jonah." ~**Cee and Ed**

"No longer yearning for a white Christmas but The warmth and company of my family! Thank you Lord for granting me a loving family! Though separated by great distance, may they feel my love and thoughts through the universal celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!" ~**Angela Yung**

"Think back the last time, before Advent, when you had the imagery of Christmas in your mind. Was it the "Christmas Shop" and all the decorations it displays for sale? Was it those glossy metallic red and green paper wrapped boxes on display in shops? Or was it anything if not someone dressed in red with fluffy white collar? No. It was simply imagery overload- all sorts of red and green and flashy white and snow and trees and reindeer antlers and red nose and... well, anything but. Only when I was at peace in my praying time and daily reflections did I contemplate what Jesus' birth means. A simple silence.

Jesus did not come to this world in extravagant glamour with fireworks, lights and opened champagne, but in a humble corner of an inn where no one would normally visit. And that's where those seek him will find him. In our own quietness, away from the noise and distractions of our daily lives, are we able to feel his presence. Christmas for me is each time, in my quietness, when Jesus comes into my prayerful mind. Christmas means Jesus' presence in all who seeks him." ~**O'Kelly Tam**



"I love the season of Advent & Christmas.

Advent is a time of waiting and longing. I am a quick tempered person. I want everything to happen quickly, even immediately. I don't want to wait. For me waiting is boring and a waste of time. However I find waiting in the advent season so different. I see it as very beautiful. Because I know what and for whom I am waiting.

I am waiting for the one my heart most desires!
I am waiting for my loving saviour!
I am waiting for my King of Peace!

The longer I wait, the stronger is my desire!
And the more eager is my heart!
I know all the time I spend is worthwhile.
Once He comes, My joy will overflow.

He brings me the peace which the world cannot give.
The Peace which everyone hungers for.
The Peace which helps us to build harmonious relationships.
The Peace which brings justice to society.

Mary waited for 9 months, then came her cherished son.
Mary, you bore Him in your womb, please teach me to bear Him in my heart, and wait for Him during this season. I know once He comes, all the pain of waiting will be over.
I know that only peaceful people can bring Hope.
Hope in God! Hope in the Incarnate Word!

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!"

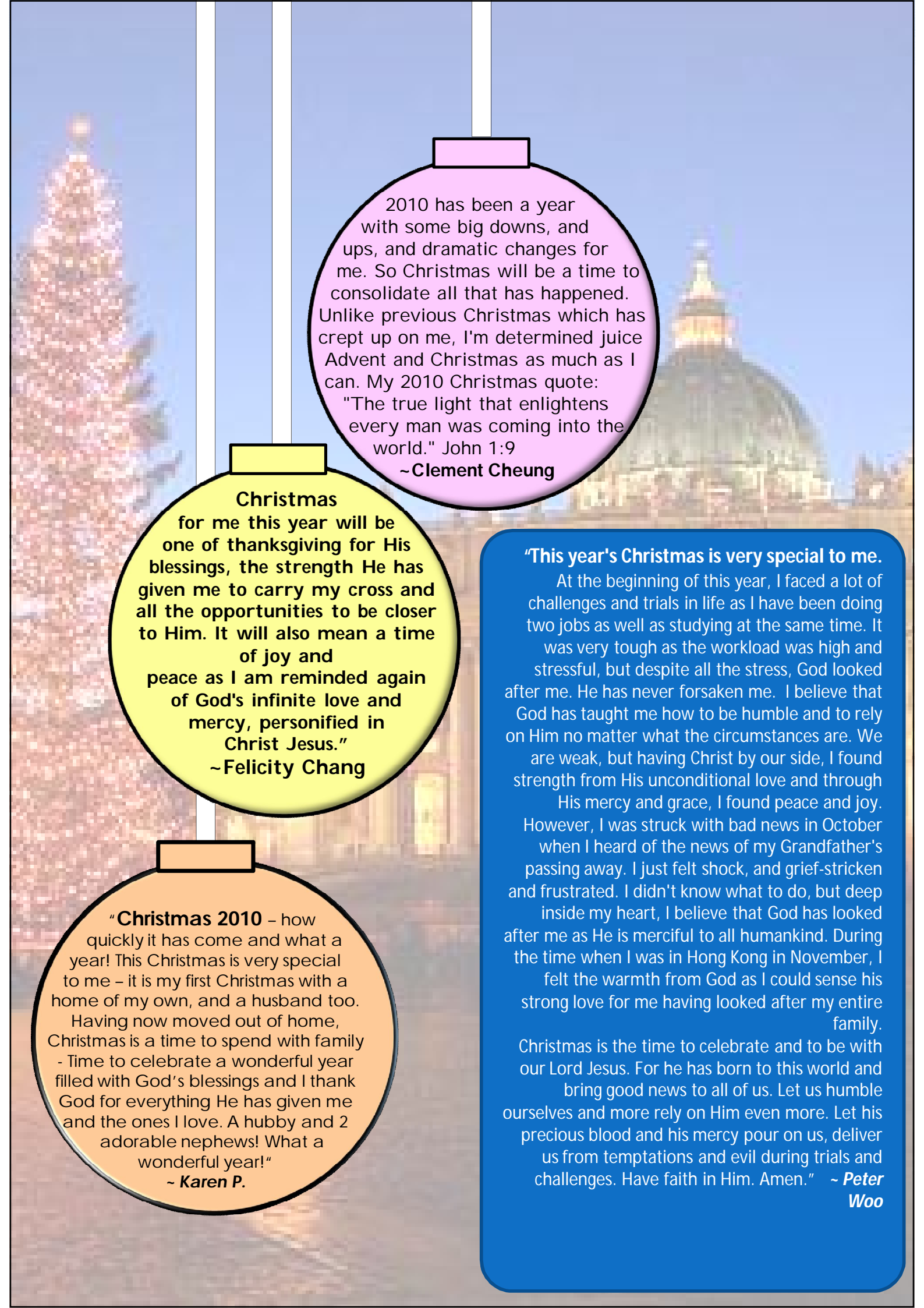
~ Sr Teresa Chiu



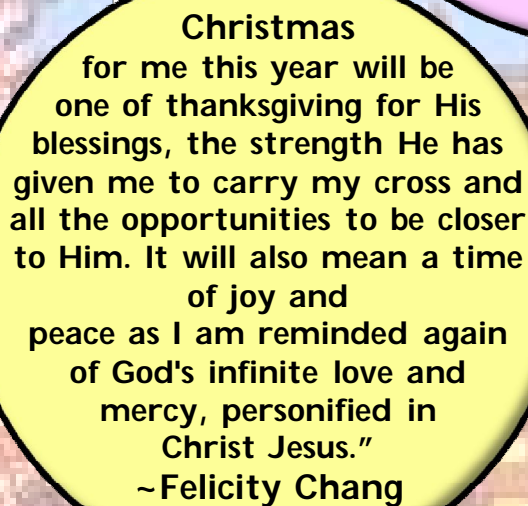
"Christmas this year has a very special meaning to me and my wife Ada. Our first child Jonathan was born on the 8th of September this year which is also the same day we celebrate the birth of our Mother Mary. With the blessing from our Lord, the childbirth process we went through was basically trouble-free and took place in a modern and well-equipped hospital.

Apart from all the excitement and tiredness as a new parent to our first child, it is also a good reminder to us of how much blessing we received from our loving God in the past few months with Jonathan being the greatest gift. With Christmas celebration just a couple of weeks away, everyone around us is talking about what they are planning to do during the Christmas break. When I was asked to write an article for Christmas this year, one thing that struck me most is the extremely humble way that Jesus was born and when in comparison with the modern day childbirth process, it is not too difficult to see how many things we just take for granted and how easy it is to forget the abundant blessings and love that we constantly receive from our loving Father. We should always receive God's blessings with a loving and also a giving heart and pass it onto others whom God wants us to look after for Him."

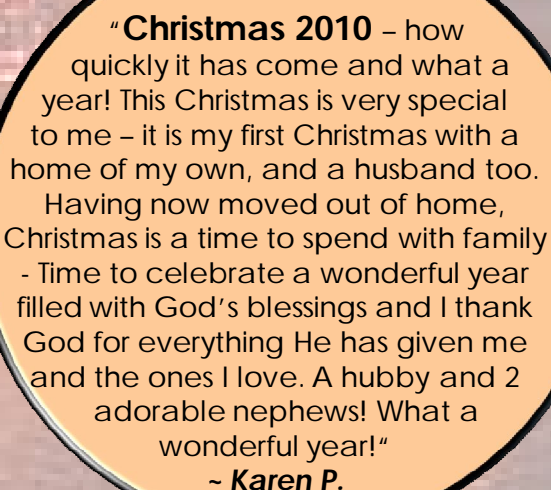
~ Patrick Chiu



2010 has been a year with some big downs, and ups, and dramatic changes for me. So Christmas will be a time to consolidate all that has happened. Unlike previous Christmas which has crept up on me, I'm determined to enjoy Advent and Christmas as much as I can. My 2010 Christmas quote: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." John 1:9
~Clement Cheung



Christmas for me this year will be one of thanksgiving for His blessings, the strength He has given me to carry my cross and all the opportunities to be closer to Him. It will also mean a time of joy and peace as I am reminded again of God's infinite love and mercy, personified in Christ Jesus."
~Felicity Chang



"Christmas 2010 – how quickly it has come and what a year! This Christmas is very special to me – it is my first Christmas with a home of my own, and a husband too. Having now moved out of home, Christmas is a time to spend with family - Time to celebrate a wonderful year filled with God's blessings and I thank God for everything He has given me and the ones I love. A hubby and 2 adorable nephews! What a wonderful year!"
~ Karen P.

"This year's Christmas is very special to me.

At the beginning of this year, I faced a lot of challenges and trials in life as I have been doing two jobs as well as studying at the same time. It was very tough as the workload was high and stressful, but despite all the stress, God looked after me. He has never forsaken me. I believe that God has taught me how to be humble and to rely on Him no matter what the circumstances are. We are weak, but having Christ by our side, I found strength from His unconditional love and through His mercy and grace, I found peace and joy. However, I was struck with bad news in October when I heard of the news of my Grandfather's passing away. I just felt shock, and grief-stricken and frustrated. I didn't know what to do, but deep inside my heart, I believe that God has looked after me as He is merciful to all humankind. During the time when I was in Hong Kong in November, I felt the warmth from God as I could sense his strong love for me having looked after my entire family. Christmas is the time to celebrate and to be with our Lord Jesus. For he has born to this world and bring good news to all of us. Let us humble ourselves and more rely on Him even more. Let his precious blood and his mercy pour on us, deliver us from temptations and evil during trials and challenges. Have faith in Him. Amen." ~ Peter Woo



"I always think it is great that Christmas and New Year are so close together and they are at the end of the year. Imagine if Christmas was really in July and we have to wait for another half a year to turn over a new leaf! Having Christmas as one of the last big events of the year (or first big event liturgically but you know what I mean:) adds poignancy and meaning apart from its obvious religious significance.

This Christmas I have been granted the best gift ever (and I am not talking about my new phone:) We have been praying for a child for years and she has literally 'incarnated' into our family. No longer is she an idea or a wish, she is literally 'here among us' in the flesh:)

Amelia really helps me understand that we came from love and tenderness and we are all gifts to one another. What is more her fragility taught me that life needs protection and nurturing for it to grow.

I am sitting here thinking I am truly blessed. I am on the receiving end this year big time. I pray that I will be less of a procrastinator and more of a person that give flesh to idea and a better gifts giver for we retain values when we give what we have received." ~ **John Ting**

"What does Christmas mean to you?"

1. Body and dental checks?
2. Parties?
3. Spending times with someone matters in your life?
4. Presents?
5. Food...turkey?
6. Holidays?
7. Shopping and hence retails sales boost?
8. Christmas trees?
9. Time of the year for being nostalgia?
10. Romance?



The above is a brief summary of 10 individuals' view corresponding to the subject above when I'm asked to write on this subject. None of them look like the right answer, though I'm unsure if there's a right answer, they just sound distant from the true meaning of Christmas.

I'm thankful for this opportunity that allows me to give more thoughts about Christmas, it reminds me not to overlook the true meaning that Christmas is the time for us to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. Only with this, the parties, food, presents and vacation that we plan for our families, immediate and extended, friends and whoever matters to our lives to celebrate this special season seem to make sense.

Merry Christmas. May God bless you all."

~ **Phylli Tang (UNSW CASS Alumni)**

The Alumni wishes every one of you a Christmas filled with love and happiness and a blessed new year! Stay safe and we will see you again in 2011.

A Report on our CASS Alumni Pilgrimage to Mt Carmel Retreat Centre

On 28-29 August 2010, the Alumni organised a pilgrimage to Mr Carmel Retreat Centre. Whilst understanding the Carmelites' life, the trip's aim was to provide a place for spiritual renewal for all those who attended under the guidance of our Retreat Director, Fr Greg Homeming.

We have received many positive feedback on the pilgrimage, in particular, the sharing between the participants and the talks provided by Fr Greg Homeming which concentrated on prayer and how to pray, were very applicable to our personal lives.

As one participant shared: *"I have learnt how to pray from this retreat. In the past, when I prayed to God, I just keep talking to God without listening. As the Fr Greg told us in the talk, after praying, I can keep silence for a while to let God to response to us. In this retreat, I had a valuable time to meet every one of us and to have group sharing."*

The invitation to the pilgrimage was offered to other groups in CCPC, and the result of a balance of both senior adults and those from ex-CASS. The sharing opportunities between these two seemingly different generations provided much value as they were able to share their different perspectives of life. From another: *"I found the group sharing at the beginning and end of retreat was very good, very valuable to be able to hear from different perspectives of people living at different stages of their lives."*

Needless to say, the pilgrimage was a success with 28 participants. However, this success is all due to the warmth Fr Greg extended to all the participants and his inspirational talks and sharings including "Carmelites Spirituality", "How to Pray" and "Introducing Jesus in our lives through Prayer". We thank Fr Greg again for his time and all those who participated to make this a truly memorable event.

