



# C O N T E N T S

## *From the editor*



Given that the holiday season is coming up, we've decided to appropriately theme this edition to be "Around the World".

We have chosen two very special countries to research and also provide some reflections on our own travel experiences. One a European country, the other an Asian country. Though vastly different in their location, both exuberant in culture and history. What we have are personal reflections and places of interest that will surely assist you in looking for a fulfilling holiday destination!

We've also had the honour of interviewing ex-CASS members, Lucia Wong and Angela Chan on their experiences on working overseas, which no doubt at some point in time has crossed the mind of many current and ex-CASS members. In these interviews, we can find out what they felt whilst working overseas.

Following on from our previous editions of the newsletters, we continue with our pilgrimage of the religious orders. On this occasion, we are thrilled to have Father Greg Homeming to talk to us in relation to the Carmelites, his past and his inspirations.

If you missed out last edition's of the newsletter *Love and Marriage*, you would have also missed out Sister Teresa's reflections on love and marriage. As Sister has witnessed many marriages in and outside CASS, and being a counsellor to many family and friends, she has much to share. Love and marriage, as many now know it, is not something easy. What Sister has provided is a sequel to the first. In this sequel, Sister discusses what makes a "healthy" relationship, being single (while searching and waiting for your life partner), the break-up, and maintaining a good marriage.

Many thanks to all the (hardworking) contributors of this edition of the newsletter. Without your input, this newsletter would not have been published!

I hope you enjoy the holiday edition of *Iter Nostrum* (Latin for "our journey"). On behalf of the CASS Alumni, I wish you a very merry and safe Christmas and holiday period!

<b>Greece</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Japan</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Interview with Father Greg Homeming: The Carmelites</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Sister Teresa's reflections on Love and Marriage – the Sequel</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Where are they now? Lucia Wong &amp; Angela Chan</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Other updates</b>	<b>Page 17</b>

# Greece



With superstars **Matt Damon**, **Angelina Jolie**, Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan choosing to feature Greece in their films (Bourne Identity, Tomb Raider, the Cradle of Life and Mama Mia respectively), Greece must be something special!

Sapphire seas, white-washed villages, regional and architectural diversity, a history and culture evolving from thousands and thousands of years with significant influence on our current arts, language, philosophy, politics, Platonic ideals and the Sacratric method...

Idyllic island beaches with the such historical depth – what else is there to seek in a holiday destination?

Located in Southern Europe, Greece are neighbours with Turkey, Bulgaria and Albania.

Due to its reliably sunny summer weather, nightlife, historical sites and natural beauty, Greece attracted 17 million visitors during the months of January 2007 to mid-August 2007 alone, becoming one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

With a history of extending several thousands of years, one of the most capturing sites are the remains of ancient grounds:

The **Acropolis**, a **Unesco World Heritage Site** - the ancient fortified town of Athens, dating back to the Late Bronze Age, and the site of the best buildings of the Greek Classical age: the Parthenon, the Erectheion, the Temple of Athena Nike.



The **Ancient Agora** — The site of the Ancient Agora in a very green space and a very beautiful view of the Acropolis. You will see the Temple of Hephaestus, the best preserved ancient Greek temple, the Attalos Stoa, the museum of the agora which is a reconstructed ancient building. From the agora you can walk towards Acropolis. Extension of the agora is the Roman Forum.

The **Temple of Olympian Zeus** — Only the ruins remain today. The 1896 Olympic Stadium and Hadrian's Arch are located nearby.



## Greece Fact File

Official name:	Hellenic Republic
Capital:	Athens
Currency:	Euro
Religions:	Greek Orthodox 80%; Roman Catholic 10%; Muslim 10%
Population density:	84/km <sup>2</sup>
Human development index:	0.921 (high)

## Best time to travel

Summers are hot and dry with a 7-month period of near-constant sunshine generally from April until November. The remainder of the year is characterized by a relatively cold, rainy period which generally starts sometime in November and lasts until late March or early April.

The most pleasant weather occurs in May-June and September-October. The warmest time of the year starts in mid-July and generally lasts until mid-August, when the annual *meltémi* winds from the north cool the country. Mid-July to mid-August is the height of summer, and the midday sun tends to get very strong.

## Popular destinations

Athens	capital, acropolis, major museums and many nearby sites
Corfu	large island with many attractions
Crete	island with varied attractions
Delphi	site of the famous oracle of Apollo, major archeological site
Meteora	hilltop monasteries
Mount Athos	semi-independent ecclesiastical republic
Mykonos	world famous sophisticated vacation center
Olympia	sanctuary dedicated to Zeus, site of the ancient Olympics
Rhodes	island with ancient monuments, as well as beaches
Santorini	great natural wonder and Greece's major honeymoon destination



Mykonos



The National Academy Athens



## A Taste of Greece

### Athens

Athens is the capital of Greece, with 3.7 million inhabitants. It is in many ways the birthplace of Classical Greece, and therefore of Western civilization.

A must-see city due to the evolution of the culture apparent in its architecture (or what remains of it). Athens has one of the longest history in Europe and in the world. Athens has been continuously inhabited for over 3,000 years, becoming the leading city of Ancient Greece in the first millennium BC; its cultural achievements during the 5th century BC laid the foundations of western civilization. During the Middle Ages, the city experienced decline and then recovery under the Byzantine Empire, and was relatively prosperous during the Crusades, benefiting from Italian trade. After a long period of decline under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Athens re-emerged in the 19th century as the capital of the independent Greek state.

Visit:

- The Acropolis (see previous page)
- The Ancient Agora (see previous page)
- Syntagma Square: Check out the Parliament building and the newly-restored Grande Bretagne Hotel. Also, catch the changing of the guards in front of the Parliament every hour on the hour. Their uniforms and walking style is fun to see but make sure you don't stand on the wrong side of them if you want to take a picture.
- The Kerameikos: The site of the ancient cemetery of Athens. It also houses the Dipylon Gate, where the Panathenaic procession would begin. It has a museum showcasing many of the grave stele and other archaeological items found on the grounds.
- The Temple of Olympian Zeus (see previous page)
- Panathianiko Stadium: The stadium that housed the first modern day Olympic Games of 1896. It's an enormous, white, marble stadium, with a horseshoe configuration stadium.
- Lycabettus Hill: A 200m hill bordering the Kolonaki district. You can reach the top by walking or by a funicular railway [small ticket charge]. There are restaurants and cafés and a great view of Athens towards the sea. From halfway up looking towards the sea there are astonishing views of the Parthenon with the blue of the sea glimpsed between its columns.

## ***Taste of Greece – continued***

**Santorini** is a volcanic island in the Cyclades group of the Greek islands. It is located between Ios and Anafi islands. It is famous for dramatic views, stunning sunsets from Oia town, the strange white aubergine, the town of Thira and naturally its very own active volcano. There are naturally fantastic beaches such as the beach of Perissa, maybe the best beach in Santorini, the black pebble beach of Kamari, white beach and red beach.

The towns of Fira, Ia (also known as Oia) and Thirasis cling to the steep cliffs facing into the caldera bay. Tours to the central "smoking" islands are readily available and one can see and feel steam vents and recent (1950s) lava flows.

Another popular reason for coming to Santorini is the legend that its sunsets are one of the most spectacular in the world. Ia is one of the few places on the island which is both close to a sea and offers a good view to a sunset over the sea: in other towns, the sun disappears behind the volcano.



### **What to see:**

#### • Archaeological Sites

Two great civilizations have left their mark on Santorini: one belongs to prehistoric times and is apparent in what has been coming to light in the excavations at Akrotiri ("the prehistoric Pompeii of the Aegean"). The other is a Greek civilization represented by the ancient city located on Mesa Vouno (a city founded on limestone rock)..

#### • Museums

The Museum of Prehistoric Thera – with masterpieces of art in the prehistoric Aegean, such as the famous wall-paintings and the unique gold ibex figurine, place it on a par with the Acropolis Museum of Classical Greece (Parthenon sculptures) and the Vergina Museum of Northern Greece.

The Archaeological Museum - collections of sculpture (ranging from the Archaic to the Roman period), inscriptions (ranging from the Archaic to the Roman period) and vases and clay figurines (dating from the Geometric to the Hellenistic periods).

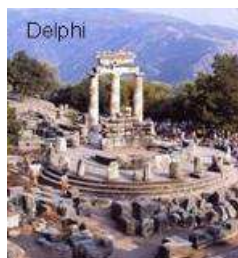
Argyros Mansion - One of the most notable and more recently build monuments of Santorini that combines the traditional Theraic architecture with neoclassic elements, offering you an authentic sight of the Greek cultural heritage. The furnishings and the household effects of the building, as well as its exceptional ceiling paintings, are preserved until today.

#### • Natural sights

Aside from the beaches of Santorini, another natural sight to visit is the volcano.

The two small islands in the center of the Santorini caldera, Palea and Nea Kameni, " the volcano " to the local people, are the youngest volcanic lands in the Eastern Mediterranean. Palea Kameni (Old Burnt Island) is less than 2000 years old, while Nea Kameni (Young Burnt Island) began to form only 425 years ago and its youngest lavas are less than 50 years old. These two islands represent the volcano's most recent activity.

## ***Greece is more than words can say...***



## ***Taste testing: Itineraries for your interest***

### **1) The Greek Islands - suggested island hopping itinerary**

2 days	Athens
3 days	Mykonos
3 days	Santorini
3 days	Crete
Last day	return to Athens for departure



### **2) Footsteps of Apostle Paul 2009 (Globus Tour Operators)**

**Athens. Sightseeing and Excursion to Corinth** Visit the Acropolis with the Parthenon and Areopagus, where Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of “the Unknown God” (Acts 17:15-34). Afterwards, continue to Corinth for a guided visit of the excavations and where Apostle Paul worked for 18 months with tent makers Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-18).

**Athens–Piraeus (Embarkation)–Mykonos** Begin a 3-night Greece and Turkey cruise with a visit to the mountainous island of Mykonos.

**Rhodes** Dock in Rhodes, where Apostle Paul landed in 51 AD (Acts 21:1). Admire the medieval walled city with its palaces and “inns” built by the Knights of St. John during the Crusades. Marvel at the beauty of the island, an optional excursion to charming Lindos with the Acropolis and imposing Knight’s Castle.

**Patmos–Kusadasi, Turkey** Visit Patmos, with free time to discover the “Jerusalem of the Aegean.” Optional tour to the Monastery of St. John and tour the Cave of the Apocalypse, where John the Evangelist wrote the Book of Revelation during his exile (Rev. 1:9-11). Continue the cruise to the Turkish port of Kusadasi, where an optional excursion is available to the ruins of Ephesus, whose inhabitants were the recipients of Apostle Paul’s famous epistle (Acts 18:19-26; Ephesians) and which was once the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and to the House of Mary, where the Virgin Mary is said to have spent her last days.

**Piraeus, Greece (Disembarkation)–Thessalonika** Disembark and journey north to Thessalonika. Enjoy guided sightseeing of this city, named after Alexander the Great’s sister, and which figures prominently in the New Testament at which time this provincial capital was considered a world cultural center. This community was the center of Paul’s activities in Northern Greece. It is where he preached and founded a church and to whom he wrote two epistles (Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians).

**Thessalonika. Excursion to Philippi and Kavala** Full-day excursion along the ancient route of Apostle Paul to Amphipolis (Acts 17:1). Journey to ancient Philippi, which was named after the father of Alexander the Great. This busy Roman colony boasted a great library and theater. In Philippi, Paul preached, established the first church in Europe, and was to whom he wrote one of his epistles while imprisoned in Rome (Acts 16:11-40; Philippians). It was in this area that Paul met Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She and her household accepted Christ and were baptized in the nearby river (Acts 16:11-15). Next, continue to Kavala, ancient port of Neapolis (Acts 16:9-11).

**Thessalonika–Veria–Kalambaka** Stop in Veria (Beroea of the New Testament), where Paul and Silas were sent by friends after being accused of treason in Thessalonika (Acts 17:5-15). Visit the Bema of Apostle Paul, where Paul is said to have stood and preached the Gospel to the local community. Continue to Kalambaka.

**Kalambaka–Meteora–Athens** In Meteora, visit Varlaam and St Stephens Monasteries. Situated atop vast rocks, the 14th-century monasteries compose one of the most breathtaking sites in the world. Inside the monasteries, discover many historical and religious treasures. Return to Athens and enjoy this evening’s farewell dinner.

# Japan



## TOKYO

**It's 5pm. Rush Hour. We arrived in the thick of it.**

The timing couldn't have been more perfect for us to witness the flurry of the Shinjuku district of Tokyo. The slight drizzle did not dampen the spirit of the nightlife. The streets were flooded by Japanese in suits, rushing to their next destination.

We were entranced by the ultra-modern district of Shinjuku with its flashing neon-signs. With the wheels of our luggage squeaking behind us, we roamed the streets, trying to locate our accommodation which, according to the website, was just "around the corner".

For what it seems like eternity, especially with a troubled luggage-bag which kept tilting over, we eventually surrendered to the fact that we were lost, despite our best efforts in seeking directions. Japanese people are very friendly and always willing to help, but alas, our sign-language failed us.

And so, we caught our first taxi in Tokyo for the first time – within the first hour of the first day of our arrival! Funnily enough, according to the GPS in the taxi, we weren't too far from our destination at all. We were simply 30 metres from our accommodation.

The accommodation made the taxi trip worthwhile. With its amazing bathroom (toilet) functions, the 37" LCD TV with cable TV (here comes our late night entertainment with X-Files and House) and the most comfortable furnishings, we knew that Tokyo was going to be a treat – and indeed, it was a very special one!

With the city begging to show off its vibrancy and brightness, we wandered through the streets, captured by each aisle and walkway lit up by lanterns. We watched in awe at the bright pachinko palours (marble chinking gambling centres), the extensive karaoke lounges, the young girls in their very "unique" fashion among the boys all dressed in black. As an after-thought, we have innocently strolled through many red-light districts and not even knowing it!

The city life is modern, unique and captivating. This is, however, nowhere near the best of Japan!

## Spiritual Japan

Amidst the captivating city life, there lies the spirituality of a nation. In our five days of Tokyo trip, we visited the much anticipated Sensoji Temple at Asakusa, Meiji Shrine at Harajuku and the Buddha of Kamakura.

We were awe-struck by the magnificence of the architecture of the shrines and wowed at every photo snapping opportunity. We were touched by the thousands of messages written on the small pieces of wood, hung up around the prayer tree. We were touched because the messages were written in all types of languages, Japanese, English, Chinese, German, French, Korean, Russian... etc. These were messages of health, fortune and wellbeing from one loved one to another, miles and miles away.

## Some places of Interest

The places of interest in Tokyo and Osaka (being the only two places we visited during our trip) are:

- Imperial Palace of Tokyo (pictured)

Note, registration is required before you are allowed to walk into the grounds of the Imperial Palace. Guided tours are also available on request on entry.

- Ueno Park

A park in the city centre of Tokyo – much more cultural and grand than Hyde Park of Sydney! This park houses statues of prominent figures in the history of Japan, places of worship (Buddhism and Shinto), a flame from the Hiroshima bombings as a remembrance of peace (pictured) and a zoo! All in city centre of Tokyo!

- Tokyo Tower

In daylight, the Tokyo Tower appears like any other telecommunications tower. At night, the orange metal tower radiates elegance and majesty.

- Tsukiji (Tokyo's fish markets)

Christmas Eve at Sydney Fish Markets is nothing compared to the daily bustle of Tsukiji. The markets open at 5pm which runs through to the next morning. For visitors, if you want to try the restaurants at the Fish Market, we recommend you to go there by 8am! Otherwise, be weary of the queues and the hour long waits!

- The Buddha of Kamakura (1.5 south of Tokyo)

Smaller than the Great Buddha in Wollongong, or the one in Hong Kong, this is Buddha is still worth the visit for the tranquility of the surroundings and the picture perfect skies.

- The “harbourside” of Tokyo

For those who havent been to the US to visit the genuine Statue of Liberty, you can visit a (much smaller) replica in Tokyo. With the backdrop of the rainbow bridge, this Statue of Liberty is a worthwhile photo opportunity! (not the mention the bright and wonderful lights of the Tokyo “Eye”!)

- Tokyo shrines – such as Asakusa (pictured) & Meiji (also pictured)

Colours of red and gold, oriental architecture, peaceful tranquility, waft of the incense... Our appreciation of this Japanese culture was intense.



Imperial Palace



The flame of Hiroshima (Ueno Park)



Asakusa



Meiji Shrine



Osaka Castle

# Carmelites

## Interview with Father Greg Homeming



*Father Greg Homeming is a Friar in the Order of Discalced Carmelites in Australia where he is currently Director of Vocations and Novice Master. He has a degree in Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity and a post graduate degree in Philosophy from Melbourne University. Father Homeming specialises in the spirituality of St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Avila.*

### Fr Greg's calling

Originally a solicitor at Allens Arthur Robinson some 30 years ago, Fr Greg's calling came about whilst meditating in a prayer session at the Carmelite monastery on a visit to a friend who had recently joined the program.

Fr Greg remembers "saying no to God for a couple of years" but on the next visit, he heard the same words from God that this place, the Carmelite monastery, is where he was meant to be.

Fr Greg finally accepted God's will and joined the Discalced Carmelite Friars in 1985. Fr Greg is now a Superior of the Carmelites in Australasia/Oceania region. As part of his role as the Superior, he travels to many countries providing assistance to fellow Carmelites in need.

The Carmelites is a "small" group, with a total of 5,000 fathers, 13,000 nuns and 80,000 lay people worldwide. The countries where there are a bigger congregation of Carmelites are Spain, France, Poland, India and Italy.

### Carmelites – the focus

"The focus of the Carmelites is to be a friend of Jesus Christ," says Fr Greg. "Prayer is the core of charism and it is only through prayer that you can focus on the relationship with Christ."

Fr Greg continues with a parallel to other religions. "The Carmelites is very similar to the Asian's Zen Buddhism. It is an inward order."

Where other religious orders are "outwards", focusing on reaching to the outside world such as providing education and healthcare to those in need, the Carmelites focus on contemplative prayer. "The aim of life for a Carmelite is to be a better follower of Christ."

There is a minimum total of 3.5 hours of prayer each day of the week. In prayer, our own sinfulness and failings are considered and are taken to God. To be a Carmelite is to "live a life of prayer very well, otherwise you are not serving the Church."

Fr Greg continues with another simile, the Carmelites are like specialist doctors, with a specialization in spirituality such that many nuns and bishops come to see Fr Greg for assistance in their own spirituality.

## **Carmelites – the challenges**

Fr Greg explains the two challenges facing the Carmelites.

“The first”, says Fr Greg, “is the challenge of breaking through the atheistic attitude in Australia, and the lack of spirituality in people. Because of the inward focus, the challenge for Carmelites is finding the balance between both the inward focus and bringing the message of spirituality to the people.”

The second challenge, is one faced by other religious orders, is the lack of vocations. Fr Greg believes that most well-developed countries especially Australia, England and Canada represent a need for more spirituality. These countries fail to embrace their spiritual needs as a reflection of their focus on material items instead (careers, wealth etc). As a consequence, these communities have limited motivation in pursuing this path.

Fr Greg says that this challenge is more apparent for the Carmelites than any other religious order as the rules and the training process for the Carmelites is tougher. Only 1 out of 5 who commence the Carmelites program end up successful.

## **Carmelites – the Saints**

There are some very well known Carmelite Saints, such as, St John of the Cross, St Terese of Avila, and St Teresa of Child Jesus.

Fr Greg shares with us a summary of what we can learn from each of these Saints in our daily lives:

St John of the Cross teaches us how to grow from the difficulties and darkness and aspects of our failures so that we can blossom to become better people.

“We often run away from the bad things, or shy away from our own weaknesses. St John urges us to integrate both our positive and negative aspects in life through the context of prayer.”

The message he brings is that God is present in the good and in the bad. “He is everywhere and is in everything.”

St John of the Cross has not only inspired and led the Carmelites and other Catholics, but his teachings are also referred to by Tibetan nuns, Jews and the Muslims.

St Terese of Avila teaches us that Jesus Christ is our best friend, and how to experience having Jesus as our friend.

St Terese urges us to grow in friendship with Jesus Christ and that “being in friendship is not just an ideology”, but the importance of knowing Jesus Christ as a friend.

St Teresa of Child Jesus teaches us that “Holiness is found in little things in life”. God is in love, and God is forgiving. For those who fear God, it is a false God that they believe in.

St Teresa of Child Jesus encourages that life’s focus should be on prayer.

## **Carmelites – the Life**

The first 7 years of training at the Carmelite monastery is not easy and is one of the reasons why so many faithful and committed to vocation may not end up being successful as a Carmelite.

In the transitional stage, the first year, known as the year of “postulency”, they move into the monastery. Access to own assets such as private savings and mobile phones is still allowed.

In the second year, rules become tighter; no personal assets are allowed, minimal inward telephone calls are allowed, and visits to family is limited to once a month. “Novices” start to live the life of a Carmelite father, with 3.5 hours of prayer each day, with other hours devoted to manual labour and theology classes.

From the 3rd year, vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are taken. Theology classes are taken for the remaining 5 years, with participation in pastoral work.

Once successful and graduated, they live the life of a Carmelite. For Fr Greg, the day starts at 5.30am and ends around 11pm. The day includes 3.5 hours of prayer sessions and around 7 hours of work. In his (minimal) free time, Fr Greg enjoys reading, in particular, Shakespeare and philosophy, showing a passion in literature.

## **Fr Greg – Philosophy**

Fr Greg has a degree in philosophy. When asked for a quote outside the Bible which strikes him dearly, Fr Greg quoted Wittgenstein’s “that of which you cannot speak, you must pass over in silence”.

Fr Greg recalls the time when he was called to the death of a newborn. He did not say anything to the parents of the newborn, as words would be of little comfort. “Respect for mystery”, says Fr Greg, “In the midst of mystery, you love and you pray.”

## **Fr Greg – Around the world**

As part of his role as the Superior of the Australasia/Oceania region, Fr Greg travels frequently. When asked for a place that Fr Greg really enjoyed, he picked London “for the art galleries, the parks, the culture, and most importantly of all, it’s free!” says Fr Greg.

But when asked about a very special little place, Fr Greg chose Venice. “I want to be lost in Venice, [to be lost amidst the culture and the livelihood], but only in the evening when all the tourists have left!”

*Thank you Fr Greg for your wisdom and your time. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and a wonderful way for us to know more about you and the Order.*

*On this note, we urge all those seeking to further their spirituality to visit the Carmelite monastery at Varroville and participate in their annual retreats. Please visit [www.carmelite.com](http://www.carmelite.com).*

A sequel to...

# Sister Teresa's reflections of Love and Relationships

By Olivia Choi

In this episode of Sister Teresa's reflections on love and relationships, I will touch on a few aspects of relationships and give some of Sister's practical tips in handling a few common relationship issues. I will fill you in on Sister's insights on several interesting issues and questions:

1. What makes a "healthy" relationship?
2. Being "Single"....while searching and waiting for your life partner....
3. "Break-Up".... sometimes can be inevitable, how do we handle it?
4. Maintaining a good marriage....how to keep the fire of love burning?

## **1. What makes a "healthy" relationship?**

The love between couples should be one of "free" love, that is, "I willingly CHOOSE to love you." As this is so, in a healthy relationship, the couple should be a "gift" for each other.

Contrarily, an unhealthy relationship may be characterised by one being a "burden" to the other. This happens when one relies totally on the other. For example, when one says "I love you so much, I rely on you totally, I cannot live without you." This type of relationship can contribute to a tragic increase in suicidal rate in the case of break-ups.

Hence, it is very important that one needs to have an "independent" self, and be able to stand firm on one's feet. This can be compared to an analogy of growing plants. There are plants that can grow firmly from the soil on their own to become individual healthy plants. There are also parasites that have to cling onto other plants to grow. We all need to be like the plants that can grow on their own, and not have to rely on another to survive.

One needs to have self respect and self love before the ability to become both a "giver" and "receiver" of love. If a person feels he/she is not loveable, then he/she is in fact closing the door to let others love him/her.

As mentioned before, love should be "free", the couple should be a "gift" for each other, both showing an act of willing, selfless love. One should not give the other pressure by demanding of the other. One also should not give love to another in return for a debt, for example, "He has helped me, therefore, I need to return goodness to him."

While in a relationship, one should not be totally dependent on the other, but it is good to be interdependent of each other. One's weaknesses can then be complemented by the other's strengths and vice versa.

Why do we see so many divorces in today's society? One reason is the lack of maturity prior marriage. Maturity is when an independent self is able to make the choice to step out of him/herself to make sacrifices to be with his/her partner. It is important for a couple to reach such level of maturity before considering marriage. Good communication with each other is very important in order to maintain a happy relationship.

## **2. Being "Single"....while searching and waiting for your life partner....**

Finding a life partner is one of the most difficult things to do in life as there is no one person who can directly teach you! You may already have developed a mature, independent self, your maturity may allow you to know how to go out of your way for other people, and you may also know for yourself what qualities in a life partner you are looking for. However, where, when, and how do you meet that person? We are unable to answer those questions, but as Catholics, we need to trust that God knows. We need to pray for His guidance for us. We need to take it easy, and trust God's timing.

Some practical tips for those in the process of seeking for your life partner:

- Don't degrade yourself!! Learn to SELF-LOVE ☺ Realise that everyone can be loved, and that your qualities can be appreciated and be compatible with another.
- Develop own interests
- Open up your social circle. Expose your presence to others more.
- Don't concentrate too much on "finding the person" as this becomes an unnatural process, and can make you feel more disappointed.
- Live HAPPILY!! Happiness is contagious! So help yourself to be more happy and friendly. A happy face makes one look more beautiful!
- Stay optimistic!

## **Sister Teresa's reflections of Love and Relationships (cont'd)**

Society is changing, and nowadays, we see that girls may actively show more interest and initiatives, which in turn may make it easier for the guys to accept and begin a relationship if both are interested in each other.

The Church is also taking greater notice and care of this group of people seeking to find a life partner by involving church ministers and those who participate in pastoral work in organising social events catered for them.

### **3. "Break-Up".... sometimes can be inevitable, how do we handle it?**

A break-up is an unpleasant situation for both sides, and if not handled well, can bring about many negative feelings, such as, hurt, anger and guilt.

During the dating period, if a couple find themselves not compatible with each other, they should not force the relationship to continue. They should sit down and talk through their situation and make a clear decision to break up. It is important to deal with the present moment, and not let sweet memories from the past linger on to prevent the break-up.

"We no longer have time for each other" is a common reason couples give as the reason why they break up. Often, this implies that the love between the couple has indeed cooled down.

A break-up usually begins with one side bringing the suggestion up. This is often very disappointing for the partner. The partner can choose to ask and find out why such a suggestion made, otherwise he/she can choose to accept it politely. However, it is important not to make the other person feel guilty, for example, saying things like "If you do not love me, I will harm myself." This behaviour is telling him/her that you are a "weak" self, and that you are totally reliant on him/her.

It is important not to degrade oneself, and think that it is because oneself is not good enough, hence the break-up, but rather, the break-up occurred because both are not suited for each other.

It is also important to respect the other's decision, try to keep him/her as a friend, and not an enemy.

After a break-up, one should give him/herself "cool down" time, to prepare self for a new start, not to be afraid of meeting other people and always maintaining positive thinking, that is, not to devalue self.

It is important to remember that any relationship experience is a step to personal growth!

#### "Some break-ups are beautiful!" - How can this be?!

A beautiful break-up occurs when the couple realise the love in their relationship has come to a stand-still, they decide to sit down and talk about it, mutually agree to break-up and return to becoming friends. Yet, they still treasure the memories of their past journey together. They accept the break-up calmly and peacefully without negative feelings of guilt, anger and resentment, and continue to show respect for each other.

### **4. Maintaining a good marriage...how to keep the fire of love burning?**

We have been talking a lot about "positive thinking", how we need it during single life and break-up. To maintain a good marriage, one needs to continue to stay positive. He/She needs to remind him/herself that it was his/her own wise choice to marry his/her spouse.

Often after years of marriage, couples may feel that the "passion" which once existed in the relationship seems to gradually fade. We mentioned in last issue of the CASS Alumni newsletter that, "Love is like a bonfire". Before the fire extinguishes, you need to add another piece of wood in to keep the bonfire alight. So, similarly, in a marriage, the couple needs to occasionally create some surprises and fun moments for each other to keep the loving relationship going. Love needs to be nurtured.

It is the "determined" attitude of the couple that will sustain a good marriage, that is, both needs to have the determination to nurture the love in the relationship.

In last issue, we also talked about how a marriage couple have to accept their spouse's entire being, including their short-comings. Here, we will elaborate that one should not demand their spouse to change as this puts much pressure on him/her. Rather, an attitude of changing him/herself to become more patient, more loving and more caring towards his/her spouse will naturally allow the other to change.

And, that is all from me for now! Hope Sister's insights and words of wisdom have enlightened you all, and helpful to you in dealing with some of the common relationship issues in life!

# Where are they now?

Lucia Wong

on working overseas...

**Just a brief introduction of yourself:**

I studied Pharmacy at Sydney University. A few CASS friends I met while in University were Mary Lai, Stanley Seah, Henry Leung, Pandora Hui and Grace Mak.

**Have you worked in Australia before moving overseas?**

Yes, I was working part-time at a few retail pharmacies.

**Which country and city did you move to?**

I moved to Bristol and London in the UK. Bristol is west of London, about 2 hours drive from London, similar to what Newcastle would be to Sydney.

**How long were you overseas for?**

2 years

**Where are you now? Do you intend to stay in this place permanently?**

I'm now working in Sydney, not sure if I will stay here to work permanently.

**If you, again, decide to move elsewhere to work, which country would you choose this time?**

**Would you consider going to work in the UK again?**

I don't mind going to the UK to work again, but probably won't since I have already done it. I feel I've had my time there. I would probably prefer somewhere different, maybe Hong Kong, since that is where I'm from!

**What were the push/pull factors you had in seeking overseas employment?**

It has always been my dream, since childhood, to experience life in the UK!

**What did you like about the UK?**

I like the richness in culture and history. I admire the English people's sense of identity. I felt they have a strong sense of identity, and is proud of it. This is something I feel can be challenging as a Chinese citizen living in Australia, sometimes I experience some sort of identity crisis.

**How much research did you do on the UK before you moved there?**

I have travelled there on holiday twice before I moved there.

**Did you know friends, or relatives in the UK before you got there?**

No, I didn't have any family and friends there. But I did go to the UK with Grace, one of my pharmacy friends.

**Was working in the UK what you imagined it to be?**

Yes, pretty much, they had similar systems and regulations for pharmacy.



# Lucia Wong

## on working overseas (cont'd)

### What was the first few weeks there like? Did you feel stressed with settling?

Well, let me share with you how we went off with a bit of a shaky start! We set off from Sydney to Hong Kong first. Then we managed to miss our flight to the UK from Hong Kong because we misread our plane ticket! So, while everyone were boarding the flight, we were still at home, relaxed, surfing the net! We didn't realise till the next morning, but luckily managed to catch another flight the next night, so we still made it to work on our first day on time!

Initially, we stayed at a Bed and Breakfast place at Bristol for about a month before we moved into our own place.

I worked at a branch of a specific pharmacy company. Work was initially a bit daunting. I was on training for the job, and my preceptor had pretty high expectations, so I was often put in the deep end.

One thing I do remember was the London bombing, which happened not long after I got to the UK. I wasn't in London on that day, but it was quite a big impact knowing the attack actually happened so close to me, in the very country I was in.

### What was your lifestyle in the UK like? How does it differ from life in Sydney?

I did things I do not get to do much of in Sydney, like travelling, watching musicals, plays and operas, visit museums and galleries! Aside from work during weekdays, I plan my travel trips, so that I can spend a few weekends, and sometimes 1-2 weeks travelling to different parts of the UK & Europe a bit, to places like Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe etc.

### How did you find the social culture over in the UK?

I found that the English tends to hang around each other, so I found it fairly difficult to mix with them. Instead, I found it was easier to mix with the other Europeans, for example, Italians, Spanish, Czech, Polish and Scandinavians.

### Can you share with us one of your toughest times, and one of your most rewarding/happiest time in the UK?

The toughest time was probably after half a year, when I felt home-sick. I made the choice to persevere, and on looking back, I'm glad I made that choice!

The most rewarding times were the times I travelled! There has been a lot to learn, I've come to realise how big the world is, how much is happening in this world, and how special and beautiful the world remains despite turmoils, inequality, insecurity etc that exist in today's society.

### If you got to re-walk the steps and do it all again, would you have done anything differently?

No, I had a very good experience in the UK, and I'm very thankful for such an opportunity.

### What words of wisdom would you depart to ex-CASS members who are considering the move to UK to work?

I would be encouraging as it is an eye-opening experience, it is a chance to learn more about yourself, to see more of the world!

I believe it is important to have the interest and also to have an idea of what you want to achieve out of the working trip. I would tell them that it's not always a smooth journey, there will be lots of challenges. But the idea is to keep persevering. The rewards will be far more than the sacrifice!



# a hello from... angela chan

Hello all!

It's been 3 weeks since arriving in London. The weather is surprisingly not as gloomy as I'd imagined.? We've had many days of sunshine and blue sky and the cold is still bearable at the moment.? We're currently staying at Central London and there's a lot of buzz going on with pre-Christmas sales.

Regent Street and Oxford Street are always packed with tourists and locals, it's so crowded that it reminds me of Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui in Hong Kong! The buildings are so grand and full of history. Many of them were built centuries ago and look a lot older than St Mary's Cathedral. It reminds you of how young Australia really is as a country.

Before coming to London, I thought that it would be difficult to find a Catholic church, thinking that most churches would be Anglican. However, a quick search in google revealed a number of Catholic Churches around where I' living at the moment! There's one called Our Lady of The Assumption and St. Gregory that is only 5 minutes walk away. Being a universal Church, the familiarity of the Sunday Mass and the participation in the Eucharist really helps me to feel at home.

I've also visited the Southwark Cathedral, an originally Catholic Cathedral which was turned Anglican during the reign of Henry VIII. It was built between 1220 and 1420 and is absolutely magnificent. It feels so at home seeing so many paintings of Mother Mary and hearing "Our Father" being recited during their service.

On the work front, I've just started work last week after a 3-month break (waiting for my UK visa). Everyone is very friendly and welcoming and I've pretty much settled down into the new environment already. With the current state of the market, things are a bit quiet and it's not very busy. Let's hope that I'll make it through my probation and stay employed so that I can stick around the UK for the dream weekend trips to Europe and visit many more magnificent churches!

God Bless!

Angela



# Other updates



## 1. Community Service - DARTS

Disabled Alternative Road Travel Services (DARTS) arranges a program of recreational, educational and social activities and day trips for adults who have physical disabilities and use wheelchairs and who live in their own homes. Activities include shopping trips, barbeques, theatres, restaurants, picnics, drives, films, art and yoga classes, harbour and river cruises... the list goes on.

The Alumni has the pleasure of being part of this group, to share our experiences with those less fortunate than us. We will soon be inviting all of you to be a part of this charitable affair. Keep posted!

## 2. New Look on website

Come check this out at [www.cassalumni.asn.au](http://www.cassalumni.asn.au)!



## 3. Religious Order visitation

Keep your eyes wide for our next visitation!