



Alice Puah  
(Left, 3<sup>rd</sup> row)

Ellen Chua  
(Right, 3<sup>rd</sup> row)

It was then decided that we would have regular Zoom catchup every Monday at 3.00 pm. There will be two parts to the session, beginning with fellowship and interactive activities, followed by Rosary prayer and Spiritual reflection in the second part.

Interactive activities like Finger Exercises, Seven Body Percussion Game, and Japanese Abacus were suggested. Being a newbie to hosting a Zoom, I have now to struggle to learn the 'share screen' feature on the Zoom from Raymond Ruan, and even from my children.

I certainly hope that over time, more Seniors will come on board the Zoom session to stay connected. I also encourage the Seniors to go back to their phones and to call one another -- especially those who are living alone and perhaps even beyond our group, and uplift our spirits.

It was heartening that two ladies, Alice Phua and Ellen Chua, readily accepted our invite to our Monday sessions and easily got acquainted with our chatty Seniors. I certainly look forward to meeting them in person when the situation permits.

I believe that this effort: "Let's Connect" can still be a small Christian act of reaching out to one another during these restrictive and lonely times and keeping us relevant and yet safe in our silver years.



**Even when things seem hopeless, you can hope in God because He loves you**

Even if you are in the midst of a difficult time with several restrictions and inconveniences due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, there is still hope. Everything around you may feel like it's falling apart. Everything inside of you may feel like it's falling apart. But God's love and mercy will never fail you.

Ask God to give you hope because of His never ending love. Ask Him to fill you with His peace that is more powerful than all of the hard things in your life. Every day is a new opportunity to receive God's mercy and love.



Mission Statement: To promote a purposeful, productive, healthy and happy lifestyle



*Wishing St Mary's Seniors  
A blessed and joyful  
Christmas Season.*

**It's a season to give,  
It's a season to love,  
It's a season to share.**

**God's love for you and me.**

### Food for Thought this Christmas



Christmas is for everyone, adults and children alike. Allow this season to fill your hearts and let go of the thing you dislike. (Julie Herbert)

God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it. (Pope Francis)

If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart. (Bob Hope)

The coming of Jesus at Bethlehem brought joy to the world and to every human heart. May His coming this Christmas bring to each one of us that peace and joy that He desires to give. (Mother St Teresa)



## Do not pay for Mass, redemption is free, Pope says

by Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

**Vatican City** --- Mass isn't a paid arrangement for salvation but rather the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice of his life, given freely to all, Pope Francis said.

Christians can make a silent prayer during Mass or donate money to offer a Mass for a loved one who is in need or passed away, but should never feel obliged to make a payment, the Pope said at his weekly general audience at the Vatican on March 7 this year.



*Pope Francis greets people during his general audience in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on March 7. The Pope greeted an overflow crowd in the basilica after leading the main part of the audience in Paul VI hall. (CNS/Paul Harina)*

Nothing! Understood? Nothing! You do not pay for the Mass! The Mass is Christ's sacrifice, which is free. Redemption is free. If you want to make an offering, do it. But you do not pay for it! This is important to understand!" he said.

Pope Francis held the audience in the Vatican's Paul VI hall due to forecasts of rain for Rome. The Vatican also opened St Peter's Basilica to accommodate the overflow, with giant screens set up in the basilica so the people could follow the audience.

Continued .....

However, despite predictions of dreary weather, the sun brightly peered through the clouds above St Peter's, which the Pope noted after the audience, when he went to the basilica to greet and bless those inside.

"Today, we thought the rain was coming, but who can understand Rome? The weather in Rome is like that," he said.

In his main talk, the Pope continued his series on the Mass, focusing on the Eucharistic prayer, "the central moment" in which Christians relive "what Jesus himself did at the table with the apostles at the Last Supper."

"In this solemn prayer, the church expresses what it does when she celebrates the Eucharist and the reason why she celebrates it, that is, to make communion with Christ truly present in the consecrated bread and wine" the Pope said.

The Eucharistic prayer, he explained, is composed of several formulas, beginning with the preface, "an action of thanksgiving for God's gifts" followed by the acclamation of "holy."

"It is beautiful to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord.' It is beautiful to sing it so that the entire assembly unites their voices with those of the angels and saints to praise and glorify God," he said.

During the consecration, he added, the bread and wine become the body of Christ; it is "the mystery of faith" that all Christians must believe in.

We should not have strange thoughts such as 'How can this be?' It is the body of Christ, and that's it. Faith; faith helps us to believe, it is an act of faith. But it is the body and blood of Christ," the Pope said.

Pope Francis said that through the Eucharistic prayer, Christians "learn three attitudes that should never be missing from Jesus' followers," to give thanks always and everywhere, to make one's life a gift of love and to build communion in the church and with everyone.

"The central prayer of the Mass educates us, little by little, to make of our whole life a 'Eucharist,'" the Pope said.

## Let's Connect by Teresa Koh



**Sigh ....** The Covid-19 Pandemic seems to stay indefinitely. With the rising spike in infection and more restrictive measures, meeting physically for Seniors seems a long winding road ahead. For me, it seems inadequate just staying connected through the group's Whatsapp chat.

So, end of September, I decided to hold a Zoom session for the Seniors who are keen. The response was encouraging and the casual catchup went buzzing that we had to extend our Zoom time.

Continued .....