

# Helping students to be spiritually and morally strong Canossians

## Spotlight on Canossa Catholic Primary School.

### Michele Ho

The morning begins with quiet time. Students sit tall with their hands on their laps. Eyes closed, their calm, serene countenance reflects the meditative mood they enter into as they centre themselves on the value for the day. It is a great way to quiet busy hands and minds, energise the brain, improve concentration and increase self-awareness.

Morning prayers instil in Canossa Catholic Primary School students the importance of being prayerful and intimate with God as they place their trust in Him at the start of the day.

In the words of the school's Mother Foundress, Saint Magdalene of Canossa, "The Spirit of Prayer is our support and countenance."

The morning hymn right after prayers ushers in God's love, joy, hope and peace. Students learn Italian hymns like Padre Nostro (The Lord's Prayer) to remember and appreciate our Italian heritage.

### Honouring our Foundress

At Canossa Catholic Primary, we believe in keeping ties with our Canossian families across borders, in line with our Foundress' mission.

During our Primary 5's annual cultural immersion trip to Malacca, students visited Sacred Heart Canossian Convent, which is one of the many Canossian schools around the world. They learn how connected the Canossian schools are despite the geographical distance and how each school lives out our Foundress' mission steadfastly and diligently.

Canossa Catholic Primary offers opportunities to participate in student exchange programmes with other Canossian schools. In 2019, we warmly welcomed the staff and pupils from the three Canossian Hong Kong schools, namely Canossa Primary School (Wong Tai Sin), Canossa Primary School (San Po Kong) and St Mary Canossian.

The cooperation and exchange between our schools in different countries and cultures allow us to strengthen our commitment to education. This synergistic relationship allows for opportunities for formation and greater collaboration among students and teachers.



Primary 6 students beaming with joy after a baking session during the Bread Door project.

### Awareness of dignity

Both the Sisters and educators at Canossa Catholic Primary share in the Foundress' call in education to preserve the dignity of our children so that they live meaningful lives and contribute to their families and society.

Since 1941, the Canossian Sisters have passionately walked in the footsteps of Mother Foundress, here at Sallim Road. We reached out to children in the community, starting with the care of orphaned children.

The school is blessed by the religious presence of the Canossian Sisters. The Sisters guide our Catholic students in their walk with God during the weekly Catechism classes, deepening their spiritual growth through prayer, biblical truths and prayerful reflection.

Sister Janet Wang who teaches weekly Catechism at the school, believes it is "important to anchor the core values of charity, humility and forgiveness". She shares with her students "how to grow in God's love, how to share God's love with others and how to practise humility and forgiveness in their daily lives."

### A strong society

Our programmes aim to develop children into spiritually and morally strong Canossians who will become good citizens faithful to God. Catholic students from Primary 3-6 attend an annual Lenten Retreat, which allows them to deepen their spiritual encounter and relationship with God.

In honouring the sacrifice of Jesus, the school enters the season of Lent, seeking to develop in students their personal conviction to live out God's unconditional love for them. Students of different faiths are invited to engage in daily self-reflections and partake in daily acts of love, kindness and generosity in order to become better versions of themselves.

40 Days of Kindness, a project launched at the start of Lent, motivates students to do good every day. Simple acts like saying "I love you" to a family member, practising inclusiveness and taking on the social responsibility of cleaning up the classroom or the canteen are all acts of charity, humility and kindness. It is hoped that the ripple effect will allow one to spread God's love and kindness.

The Gift of Love project during Lent encourages students to commit to serving God and society. Understanding that even in their capacity as children, they can sow into the lives of others to effect positive change, students enthusiastically create money boxes out of recyclables. Daily, they set aside some of their pocket money as an act of sacrifice unto others. Their generous donations go towards helping the needy under the Canossa Mission Singapore for works of charity.

### God's love

In the words of our Foundress, "Those who love are never tired, since love knows no burden." Mother Foundress' acts of charity brought hope to people and continue to inspire



Students were treated to a date with St Magdalene of Canossa, played by Sister Enrica Perego (in black), at last year's Canossian Saints' Day.

students to live as children of God in thought, word and deed.

Our school's signature Bread Door project allows graduating students the chance to experience a day in the life of Mother Foundress who was always ready to give relief to anyone who stopped by her palace gates. In this project, students knead dough with their loving hands to bake aromatic, nutritious bread to bless others.

Grateful for the experience, Primary 6 student, Cherelle Low shared, "We learned how to care for others and develop humility as we are making bread not for ourselves, but for others. I enjoyed making bread and giving it to others, which is what St Magdalene did."

In our school's weekly Catechism class and Catholic Club, Catholic students listen to God's Word and grow in faith as a community.

The Catholic Club's monthly meetings are enthusiastically facilitated by three Catholic teachers and Sr Janet. During the sessions, students learn about the Word of God and prayer, the meaning of Mass and the Rosary, the lives of Saints and the role of Guardian Angels in our lives. Sessions are meaningful and fun, incorporating action songs, games and experiential activities.

The Catholic Club members are also involved in running values and faith-related activities during our Canossian Saints' Week. Their regular attendance at first Friday Masses held monthly in the school chapel deepen their relationship with God and help them grow in faith as a student community of love and service.

In leading people to the awareness and experience of God's love for them, everyone comes together for Masses conducted throughout the year. The year starts with the Opening of School Year Mass where the new year is dedicated to God. We hold our Canossian Saints' Day Mass to commemorate the work of our Saints and close the year with our Thanksgiving Mass to give thanks to God for His abundant blessings.

Our Canossian Sisters and educators embrace the privilege of raising up daughters and sons of Canossa ever since going co-ed in 2019.

Motivated by the words of our Foundress, "Let us serve Our Lord with courage and a generous heart filled with love, but in peace", we believe our Canossian Sisters and educators are called for this divine mission to provide our Canossian girls and boys the opportunity to experience the Canossian brand of education. □

**Canossa Catholic Primary is a co-educational school, dedicated to raising daughters and sons of Canossa. If you are interested in enrolling your child and would like to find out more about the school, please call us at 6844 1418.**