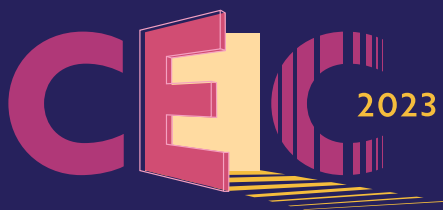




SYNERGY

**REFLECTIONS FROM THE CATHOLIC
EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2023**



AN INVITATION TOWARDS SYNERGY

The Catholic Education Conference 2023 brought participants together to reflect on pathways to Growing in Faith and Synergising as a Community.

Inspired by the Word of God through the Eucharistic Celebration with Cardinal William Goh and led by Keynote Speaker Mr Lawrence Chong (CEO of Consulus), participants were inspired to centre their lives on Jesus, "and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His Purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Incorporating a range of activities and blending a number of learning modalities, it turned out to be an enlightening, enriching and empowering experience for all participants.

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How did you encounter God during the CEC?

HOLY MASS



There were several 'God' moments during CEC, especially at the start of the conference where Cardinal presided over Mass for all Catholic educators. The fact that he made time for this occasion spoke volumes of his support for Catholic education and educators.

DANIEL DOMINIC KWEK (EDUCATOR),
SJI Junior

Beginning CEC 2023 with a Eucharistic celebration was indeed an amazing start to the conference on Synergy! Cardinal William Goh's homily based on the readings of the day, has left me pondering on my disposition as a Catholic educator in my school. We all influence one another for better or for worse. We can be like the King of Israel who prevented others in their faith journey or be like the servants who encouraged Naaman. My actions and words as an educator have an impact on the students under my charge. What I say or do can empower or discourage my students from encountering God and growing in their faith.

EILEEN GOH (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Our Lady of the Nativity



How did you encounter God during the CEC?

During the homily at mass, Cardinal's words were a wakeup call. God was calling me to talk to Him and pray.

JAVIER SOPHIA MARGARETTE PABUALAN (STUDENT),
Assumption English School



HOLY MASS



The holy mass sets the tone for the conference especially for those of us attending it virtually. It unites us. The opening hymn, 'Christ Be Our Light', was so apt. It reminds me to turn to Him as I strive to 'be the light' for my students. And the final hymn, The Summons (Will You Come and Follow Me – one of my favourites), served an examen of conscience for me as an educator.

SEET LIAN NEO MARJORIE (EDUCATOR), CHIJ
(Katong) Primary

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR LAWRENCE CHONG

I encountered God through Mr Lawrence Chong's address. He shared on how we are Walking Cathedrals who bring Jesus to those around with us. This is especially after receiving the Most Holy Eucharist. This should prompt us to behave like Jesus in our daily lives. Mr Chong shared three funny stories about the chair, the Educator, and the commander. The stories are examples of how we can see Jesus in others and be Jesus to others. I also encountered God when Mr Chong reminded us how the Saints are with us and continuously interceding for us on our faith journey.

JONATHAN R ADITIO (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School



I saw God through the stories told by Mr Lawrence Chong. His sharing reminded me that we need to open our eyes more to people around us as God comes in many forms.

LAI LING MELISSA YONG (EDUCATOR),
SJI Junior

Lawrence ignited my faith as a Educator in a Catholic school when he spoke about his younger days (Sec 1) sharing about his faith – that reminded me that we are the bridges for our students leading to God. Our students are also future 'Lawrences' in the making.

LIM LILY (EDUCATOR),
Holy Innocents' Primary School



How did you encounter God during the CEC?



I was deeply moved by the song 'The Summons' used during the time for personal reflection and during mass. The words helped me reaffirm my role as an educator, a servant of God, a chosen one to be part of my school. I know deep down my summons.

HELENA BALDWIN (EDUCATOR), Holy Innocents' Primary School

Being in a prayerful mode while listening to the scripture, I rekindled my calling to serve in a Catholic school. The notion of doing God's will and being the mode of impact for the members in my school – both Catholic and non-Catholics. The impetus to serve with love, God's Love, and to create moments for everyone to experience God through my actions and speech.

LENA SEET (EDUCATOR), Holy Innocents' Primary School



Reflecting at the conference strongly drew me to the word "Humility". Without it, there's just no way anyone can acknowledge that we are not alone, nor we can be courageous enough to face adversities and challenges. I am once again reminded that God is the one who provides all and He is all possible. Being ourselves, the children of God, we can see the vision all the time. Praise to the Lord for He is good all the time.

AGNES LEE (EDUCATOR), CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Primary)

Lawrence ignited my faith as a Educator in a Catholic school when he spoke about his younger days (Sec 1) sharing about his faith – that reminded me that we are the bridges for our students leading to God. Our students are also future 'Lawrences' in the making.

LIM LILY (EDUCATOR), Holy Innocents' Primary School



The reflection questions reminded me of the song 'Through Heaven's Eyes' in the film, The Prince of Egypt. I would try to see things, situations and people through God's eyes instead of my own - through the lens of compassion, kindness and trust.

SKY FRANK (EDUCATOR), CHIJ Our Lady of the Nativity



How did you encounter God during the CEC?

During CEC, I realised through the interactions with my group, that there are people who care about you, whether they know you personally or not. Through this, I realised that there is God in every one of us and that we should treat each other the way we would treat God.

EVAN RORY CHANDRA (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School



FELLOWSHIP

I encounter God by having conversations and listening to the reflections from people of different schools.

LACSI M ANGELI MARERO (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School



I experienced God speaking to me through the worship songs, in the chats with my IJ colleagues when checking in with each other, and during the spiritual communion where He made me realize that the mission he entrusted to me in teaching in a Catholic school for so many years, is to simply be a "Jesus" to every person I encounter.

ANGELINE GRACE GARCIA BITGUE (EDUCATOR), CHIJ (Katong) Primary

WALKING CATHEDRALS

I am the 'Walking Cathedral"! I need to walk the walk.

LOW HWEE KIAN (EDUCATOR),
St Gabriel's Secondary School

We are Walking Cathedrals to those whom we encounter and one key takeaway for me was the realisation of God's Providence in my life in giving me this opportunity to share the teachings of Catholic values.

JOY VOO (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Our Lady of the Nativity



What was a key takeaway from the CEC?



I am the Walking Cathedral and though it is tough being so, I will strive to be the face of Jesus. To take in my stride to move others through being Christ-like even as I face the valley of darkness. I will find my way back to him. I must understand my role and undertake the challenges for I know the Lord walks beside me, holding my hand. I must serve with an open mind, a sincere heart and with loving eyes.

HELENA BALDWIN (EDUCATOR),
Holy Innocents' Primary School

What was a key takeaway from the CEC?

SYNERGY!

The theme for 2023 CEC - 'Synergy!' is an important one. I am looking forward to working with my fellow Catholic educators to value-add to the Catholic schooling experience of both colleagues and students. Making the school a place where God is visible, and more deeply felt.

WOON HSIAO HUI (EDUCATOR),
Montfort Secondary School



We should support one another in faith as faith can only thrive in communities.

JONATHAN R ADITIO (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School School



Moving forward, it is about being companions on this journey in this endeavour as Catholic educators. Having acknowledged this, I am called to be in synergy with the greater fraternity and not work alone. I must learn to encourage my companions on this journey.

DAVID WONG (EDUCATOR),
Hai Sing Catholic School



To be present for everyone around me - strangers, friends, people I dislike, family etc. God works through everyone so I should also open my eyes to see Jesus in everyone.

LAI LING MELISSA YONG (EDUCATOR),
SJI Junior



One does not need to be healed from a life-threatening illness, to have survived a war, or witnessed a miraculous answer to one's prayers to see God. It can exist in the small things that permeate our daily lives if we look closely enough. If only we open our hearts and our minds, we will see how God has given us so much in so many ways through Providence.

TAN KWANG CHEE (EDUCATOR),
Assumption English School

RECOGNISING GOD IN OUR LIVES

I learned to have empathy. Being a Catholic means to be kind to others, just like how God intended. Being a child of God is to be kind. Empathy is important. Kindness goes a long way.

JAVIER SOPHIA MARGARETTE PABUALAN (STUDENT),
Assumption English School



What was a key takeaway from the CEC?

We should not lose hope no matter how tough the obstacle ahead of us may be as there is always something that can help us to get back on our feet.

EVAN RORY CHANDRA (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School

RECOGNISING GOD IN OUR LIVES



I realised that I am not always consciously aware that there is Jesus in everyone amid the rush to get things done and my impatience. When the moment does come, I need to remember to be like Jesus by doing things for the good of the other person.

FLORENCIA EDITH WIRIA (EDUCATOR),
De La Salle School

Surely, there is goodness in everyone. The Lord has been generous to me so I should be generous with others. I am Jesus when I interact with others and see how I can help them. I am Jesus when I think about the difficulties others are facing and reach out to tell them, "Here I am! Let me support you!" A smile, a greeting, a loving look, a gentle touch...this is Jesus in me. I pray for the grace to be kind and patient especially when I feel so tempted to just walk away and say I cannot.

CINDY SOON (EDUCATOR), CHIJ St Joseph's Convent

BEING MISSIONARY IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

This CEC has driven home even more clearly the importance of our being Catholic educators in school. It is amazing the amount of influence we have on our students, on young minds hungry for knowledge and guidance. Our focus on moral and ethical values helps our students learn integrity and compassion, values that will help them navigate through the challenges of life.

ADELINE CHUA (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Our Lady of the Nativity



One of the key takeaways from CEC is the challenge to make our Catholic schools more Catholic without infringing on other religions. We need to be better role models in our faith in the staff room and in class so that we can plant seeds that bear fruits in the long run. We need to be more authentic, more joyful, and not be hypocrites so that non-Catholics will be more drawn to our faith. Even if they don't eventually convert, they will see that we are different in a good way.

DANIEL DOMINIC KWEK (EDUCATOR), SJI Junior



What was a key takeaway from the CEC?

PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING

BEING MISSIONARY IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

I need to see Catholic education beyond that of organizing Catholic events and conducting catechism classes. I see the need to build a vibrant community of Catholic students who have a rich prayer life, individuals who have become used to belonging to and serving in a Catholic community from young.

AGNES LEE (EDUCATOR),
De La Salle School



As Prophet – “Catholic schools are the vanguard for the future of humanity.” A powerful statement from Lawrence, it made me ‘see’ the ‘power’ I have as a Catholic Educator in a Catholic school to proclaim the good news through my interactions and share the gift of love.

SEET LIAN NEO MARJORIE (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ (Katong) Primary

I’m trying to serve my school as best I can - to put others before self and to give my time, support, and guidance to others. Hopefully in doing so, it will make a positive difference. Will keep praying for grace and wisdom.

CHERYL ANNE LIM (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Katong Convent



We should embody the teaching of Jesus to be a Priest, Prophet and King. To be a Priest, we should see Jesus in others, and be Jesus to them. To be a Prophet, we should try our best to spread the Word of God to others and use our God-given talents to the best of our ability to evangelize. To be a King, it is important that we first serve others before leading them. For example, we should first clarify our own values, align our actions with them, seek ways to improve, foster collaboration by building trust and strengthen others, and then to recognize and appreciate the contributions and achievements of others.

NATHANIEL LAU KEA CHUAN (STUDENT),
Assumption English School

We all have a ‘Faith Compass’ when we are baptised, so we move on as a Priest, Prophet and King. In our school, we learn to serve with faith, hope and charity.

DOREEN YEO (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ (Katong) Primary



How might you move forward as **Priest, Prophet and King** in your school?



I can continue to see Jesus in others and be Jesus to others (Priest). I can also influence others with my Catholic values and place others above myself (Prophet). I can make sure that my actions are pleasing to God and done in love through faith (King).

**JONATHAN R ADITIO
(STUDENT),**
Hai Sing Catholic School

Moving forward as a Priest, Prophet and King in my school, I will encourage those that are usually absent from Catholic activities and school mass to join in. They will get to learn more about the Catholic faith, and this spreads the word of God, as well as builds a bigger and stronger community where more people feel a sense of belonging.

ETHEN SEAH (STUDENT),
St Gabriel's Secondary School



Perhaps being emotionally invested this year in my students' well-being is a baptismal call to be a King— to serve the last, the lost and the least in the cohort. God is challenging me, and He entrusts this group of children to my care and stewardship. I need to remind myself to be a Priest to those who need forgiveness and love. This is especially so for the students we deem as being hard to love. Sometimes, the ones who need to be loved are often the hardest to love. Being Jesus to them means to show them the love they lack in their homes. This is often easier said than done especially in trying times.

**FOK XING RONG MICHELE
(EDUCATOR),**
SJI Junior

I hope to serve my students with love, patience, and humility, just as Jesus had led through Love. Also, being the adult, I hope to be their role model in everything I do.

**LAI LING MELISSA YONG
(EDUCATOR),**
SJI Junior



How might you move forward as Priest, Prophet and King in your school?

I can help others like doing good acts for people. Like giving up my chair for someone more in need, or by greeting someone, which makes us a Priest. As a 'prophet', I could share the word of God, or start a club for it, starting rosaries for Catholics to do. Being 'King', I can use time to serve God, not expecting anything in return. We should also hope. Believe God's word. Be charitable in school. School could be very stressful, so praying or checking up on each other really shows God's presence in us.

JAVIER SOPHIA MARGARETTE PABUALAN (STUDENT),
Assumption English School



I can continue to see Jesus in others and be Jesus to others (Priest). I can also influence others with my Catholic values and place others above myself (Prophet). I can make sure that my actions are pleasing to God and done in love through faith (King)..

JONATHAN R ADITIO (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School

To start off, I would do so by treating everyone equally in a manner I would like to be treated, no matter who they may be. Secondly, I would listen more rather than talk so that I am able to understand and see the perspective of the person talking to me and act accordingly. Finally, I would take the time to stop and reflect on my actions more. Rather than repeating the same mistake, I can not only prevent myself from doing so again but I can use the experience to prevent others from having to face the same issues or problems as I did. This way, I would not only be helping myself but others along the way.

EVAN RORY CHANDRA (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School



To be a Priest in school, I will try to see Jesus in everyone, and act more courteously and show more empathy to all, even those who may not seem like Jesus. To be a Prophet in school, I can put more effort into the work I do for the Young Montfortian Associates, inviting others to more opportunities for an encounter with Jesus. To be a King in school, I can lead by example, respecting Educators, classmates, and show a sense of responsibility by completing schoolwork on time. I can also look for opportunities to serve others, such as helping a classmate in need.

NATHANIEL LAU KEA CHUAN (STUDENT),
Assumption English School



How might you move forward as Priest, Prophet and King in your school?

I support my friends when they are struggling with emotions or to do something they want to do but don't know how to do.

LACSI M ANGELI MARERO (STUDENT),
Hai Sing Catholic School



I try to remember that as I step into the life of each person, I'm stepping on holy ground. God is already there before me. It's easy to see Jesus in the good and the weak but not the bad. I must remind myself that Jesus is there in the people who hurt me too.

AGNES LEE (EDUCATOR),
De La Salle School

I try to be non-judgemental towards others and this practice begins from home. It is difficult but with daily prayers, it appears to be easier.

JOSEPHINE LAI (EDUCATOR),
St Anthony's Primary School

Perhaps just as a Priest administers the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I am called to grant mercy and forgiveness especially to the students with challenging attitudes and behaviour. But just as Jesus mentors Nicodemus with supernatural patience and love, and to direct him to the right path, I'm also called to do the same.

EVELYN CHIA (EDUCATOR),
Marymount Convent School



Being present when I'm with the student who is hard to love or not willing to be open to me, or a colleague who is frustrating to work with. Seeking to understand rather than trying to be understood. Making time for them.

GLORIA GURUNG (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Secondary)



I will need to make a conscious effort to remember that this person before me is Christ, and regardless of the insult and humiliation laid out before me, this person is also a darling of God my Father.

BRIAN BARTHOLOMEW TAN (EDUCATOR),
St. Gabriel's Foundation



How might you move forward as Priest, Prophet and King in your school?

“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:5). I will try not to judge others first based on what I hear from others, and try to be kinder in my interactions with others.

ALPHONSUS NEO (EDUCATOR), CHIJ Our Lady of the Nativity



With God’s grace, I want to serve my students and love them the way God has loved me. I pray that in the most difficult of situations, when students are having a hard time, I may have sufficient grace and wisdom to show and lead them to encounter Christ.

ESTHER HENG (EDUCATOR),
Holy Innocents’ High School



I do want to inspire my students to be good, warm hearted and kind to others. And I hope that I am leading by example.

ALICIA GOMES (EDUCATOR),
Montfort Junior School



To be like Jesus, a Servant King, is what I aspire to be. To be humble, a good listener, to be non- judgemental, to care for the disadvantaged. Be trusting and forgiving.

JUDINA CHEONG (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Primary (Toa Payoh)

How might you move forward as **Priest, Prophet and King** in your school?



I try to follow Christ's example on the cross, to give without counting the cost. There is a little phrase which I like which says, 'so much can be achieved if no one claims the credit'. I think if we all work for the Glory of God like all our saints and missionaries who came before us, God's grace will allow us to achieve what the world may deem impossible. After all God's 'foolishness' is wiser than human wisdom. We should learn more to lean on Him as our guide and Educator.

ERNEST LEONG (EDUCATOR),
CHIJ Secondary School

With God's grace, I will serve the little ones that I encounter, in school and in the Church, with patience and humility. I will offer up to our Lord, the challenges that I faced. I will trust in Him to show me the way to overcome the challenges.

PAULINE TAY
(EDUCATOR),
Canossian School





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