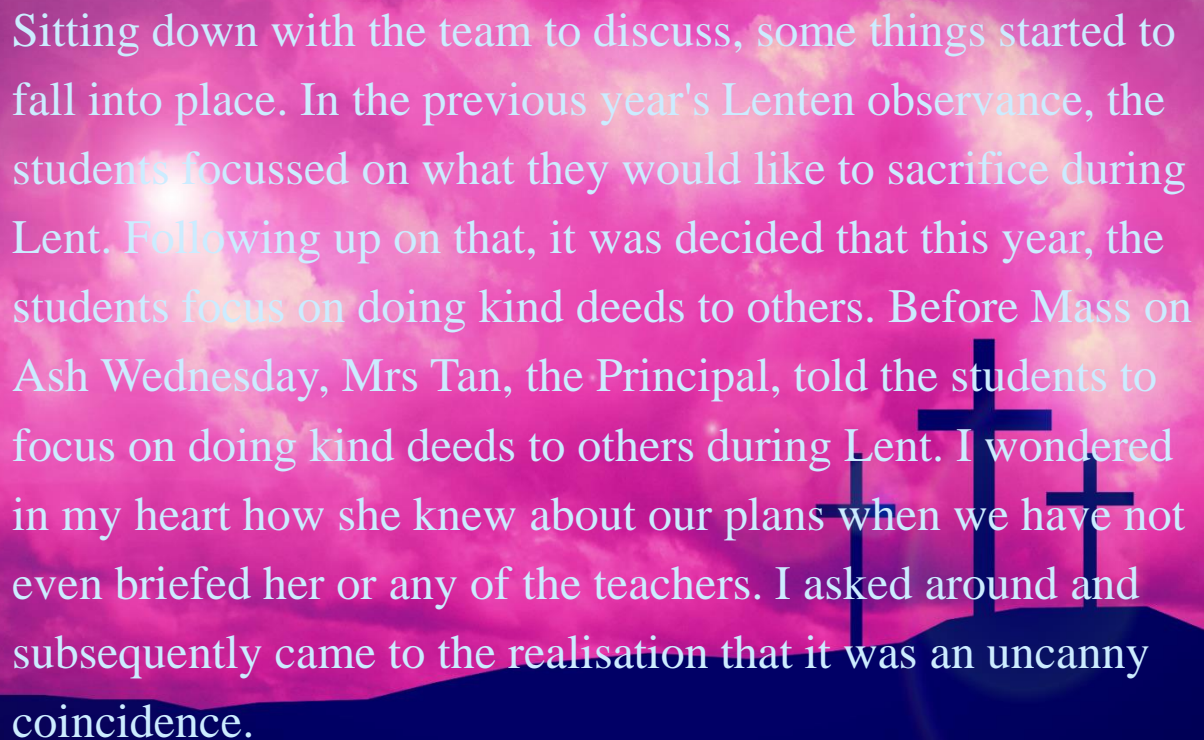


# Easter 2017

By Gregory Goh (Colette P6 Ixora & Ethel P2 Daisy)

Preparations for Easter 2017 began in earnest in January. With my little involvement helping out in the Easter Play in the previous year, having to organise the entire Lenten program and Easter Celebrations seemed a daunting task. Not knowing where to begin, the only way I know to begin was to pray.



Sitting down with the team to discuss, some things started to fall into place. In the previous year's Lenten observance, the students focussed on what they would like to sacrifice during Lent. Following up on that, it was decided that this year, the students focus on doing kind deeds to others. Before Mass on Ash Wednesday, Mrs Tan, the Principal, told the students to focus on doing kind deeds to others during Lent. I wondered in my heart how she knew about our plans when we have not even briefed her or any of the teachers. I asked around and subsequently came to the realisation that it was an uncanny coincidence.

With even more startling uncanny coincidence, Fr Simon Pereira also focused on kind deeds during the homily at the Novena session in school the following Wednesday. The message to me became very clear. That was what the team had to focus on for the students. With support from the school, students were given slips of paper for them to pen the kind deeds they did and received from others.

A box was placed on the Pastoral Notice Board for them to drop in their notes of kind deeds. These were subsequently gathered and pinned up on a moveable board which was placed in the canteen to encourage others.



These notes were used as a photo montage during the Easter Play.

With the Lenten program in place, the next challenge for me was the Easter Play. With no creative streak at all, I had no choice but to turn to prayer again. In fact, the search for ideas for the play started in January as well. This challenge was tougher than I had anticipated. With no ideas or clues to work on, I had asked God whether he really wanted our team, with no experience in drama, to write the script for the play. With that at the back of my mind, the search for the Easter Play script continued.

After some searching, the chairperson of the CPC mooted an idea for the play. It was about 3 girls with their own challenges and how they managed their challenges before and after encountering Jesus.

With that spark, another member of the CPC graciously volunteered to write the script for the play. It was by no means an easy task. The script went through seven revisions along the way. The theme for the Easter Play was "Jesus is with us always". Looking back, on whether God wanted the team to write the Easter Play script ourselves, the answer was very apparent.



Rehearsals for the play were another challenge. We managed to have a small team of parent volunteers who selflessly gave their time for the rehearsals. Despite their selflessness, some of them also underwent their own challenges. But with the help of God, I must add that they overcame and rose above their challenges.

Some teachers were also involved in the Easter Play. As their available times were different, we had to work around their schedules. That meant we had to stand in for their characters when they were not available and to rehearse multiple times to cater to the different schedules of the teachers. I am grateful to the parent volunteers for their effort and patience and to the teachers concerned for giving up their precious time.

I have to add that the teachers involved in the play were very sporting. When told that they will be dancing in front of the students on stage, they gave the initial look as if to say "you must be kidding me". With some persuasion, they took to the dance like ducks taking to water.



Teachers and PVs dancing for our Lord on Easter Monday

Come Easter Monday, the day of the Easter Play. Will we be able to deliver our Easter message to the students? Will everyone be able to play their part well? All these and other worries raced through my mind that morning as we made final preparations for the play.



It was only fitting that when all preparations were done and we were all ready for the play, we gathered together for a short prayer. After all, we were all doing this for the glory of God.

I was a nervous wreck when the play started, monitoring that everything went as planned. But something made me take a step back. An inner voice was telling me to relax and to leave everything in God's hands. As I watched the play unfold from backstage, I started relaxing especially when the students "oooohh" and "ahhhh" when they recognised their teachers as they came on stage. It was such a joy to see them enjoying the play.



Our girls joining in the dance – Every Move I Make

The teachers and parent volunteers played their characters beyond my expectation. They were so into their respective characters, something which I have not seen at all during rehearsals. When it came to the dance, I must add that the emcee was outstanding. She not only got all the students to dance, but also got all the other teachers to be involved as well. The atmosphere in the hall that day was simply awesome.



It was also an uncanny coincidence that the theme of the Easter Play was "Jesus is with us always". It was one thing to teach our children to believe and trust in Jesus, but a totally different thing when we're going through the challenges ourselves. It was only on hindsight, looking back at the challenges that we all went through preparing for the Easter Celebrations that His presence and guidance were seen and felt.

How I wish it could be felt during the actual times of the challenges. I suppose that's what trusting in Jesus means.