

# Lenten Vigil Reflection (4 - 5 April 2009)

By Marlene Teo, Youth Arise Ministry

For someone who has not made any sacrifices during Lent, Lenten Vigil is a night I've been looking forward to as I could take this opportunity to "redeem" myself by staying awake for Jesus.



Jacqueline & Marlene from Youth Arise Ministry (YAM), helping out at the registration booth

The night started off with an engaging sharing by David Cheong from Ministry of Expression (MOE), one of the many youth groups in OLPS. He led us in a time of reflection and we were encouraged to take some time to look into our lives, and write down the things that we were willing to give up for Jesus.

The theme of the Lenten Vigil was "Holy Darkness, Blessed Night". How appropriate for a night like this. As part of OLPS's Youth Ministry organising this event, I helped with registration by collecting tickets, writing names on sticker labels for the parishioners and making small talk with them. Through the short 30min interaction with the parishioners, it truly felt that we were one big family regardless of race, language or age.



David from MOE sharing and leading us in reflection



Our Emcees of the night - Darren & Nigel from Altar Servers

Surprisingly, I didn't feel sleepy and could keep awake throughout the night. Thanks to the very well thought out programme. There were sufficient breaks in between each session for us to grab a cup of coffee to keep ourselves awake.

The members from Revelation Generation (RG) then presented a skit 'Dry Bones'. Riding on the theme that we begin from 'dry bones' where Jesus, the life-giver eventually comes to revive us, four RG members simulated common woes of people through monologues of a stressed, cynical executive, a tired complaining housewife, a frustrated student who laments that it is 'not her fault'. Through all this, God comes in to ask if we are able to put our trust in Him?



RG girls giving their best in the skit 'Dry Bones'



The Sedar Meal that we part took in

The Sedar Meal was special and not to mention, delicious! Cooked and specially laid out over 33 tables in the canteen by the Family Life Society and some Faith Formation ministry members, we were asked to get into groups of ten and gather round each table to part the meal, just like how the disciples have done with Jesus at the Last Supper. I learnt what each food item meant. For example, the lamb represents the sacrificial lamb, our Lord Jesus, who died to save each of us.



Parishioners gather for prayer and to have the Sedar Meal together as a community

Sury from YAM, giving his testimony to glorify God



Back at the church hall and satisfied from a wonderful meal earlier on, we then heard Suryadi from Youth Arise Ministry who gave a testimony on how God has changed his life. He recognised that God has been instrumental since he was young, and was there for him through the ups and downs of his life.

As the night steadily progressed, people did not seem tired at all. We next reflected on Jesus and his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane as Jesus contemplated what was to come next – his trial and death. The OLPS Ensemble provided beautiful music for everyone, as we sang to various hymns and Taize songs, reflecting on how Jesus tells us, as his disciples, to “watch and pray”.



Above L-R: Members of the OLPS Ensemble: William & Elizabeth (guitars), Samantha, Abigail & Cassandra (violins), Richard (flute), Tony (our ad-hoc conductor)

Next, Luke from the Legion of Mary led us in the Stations of the Cross, which was followed by the Palm Sunday mass, celebrated by Rev Fr Augustine Tay.

The beautifully decorated palm leaves aligned along the centre aisle leading towards the altar transported me back to the scriptures. I imagined that Jesus was on a donkey, riding into Jerusalem.

**How triumphant it must have been!**

## Final Thoughts

As dawn approached and seeing all the participants relishing their Nasi Lemak breakfast which was prepared for us by the Neighbourhood Groups, I felt immensely glad to have attended “Holy Darkness, Blessed Night” – a wonderful collaboration between the Youth Ministry and various adult ministries. This Lenten Vigil was one of the best I’ve ever attended, and through it I’ve been reminded once again, of God’s unconditional and everlasting love for me. I’ve also fallen more deeply in love with Taize songs as they help me to meditate and focus on Jesus more easily as the lyrics and melody of the songs speak to me.

With meaningful words like those in my favourite song of the night, “Holy Darkness”, I pray that all of us would continue to search, seek and await him in our everyday lives. As the lyrics of the song goes, “*Holy darkness, blessed night. Heaven's answer hidden from our sight. As we await you, O God of silence, we embrace your holy night.*”

**We need not wait till Lent to make special sacrifices, as it is our Christian mission to live everyday like Christ. Amen!**

### Holy Darkness

#### Refrain

Holy darkness, blessed night  
Heaven's answer hidden from our sight  
As we await you, O God of silence  
We embrace your holy night

#### Verse 1

I have tried you in fires of affliction  
I have taught your soul to grieve  
In the barren soil of your loneliness  
There I will plant my seed

#### Verse 2

I have taught you the price of compassion  
You have stood before the grave  
Though my love can seem like a raging storm  
This is the love that saves

#### Verse 3

Were you there when I raised up the mountains?  
Can you guide the morning star?  
Does the hawk take flight when you give command?  
Why do you doubt my pow'r?

#### Verse 4

In your deepest hour of darkness  
I will give you wealth untold  
When the silence stills your spirit  
Will my riches fill your soul

#### Verse 5

As the watchman waits for morning  
And the bride awaits her groom  
So we wait to hear your footsteps  
As we rest beneath your moon.

*Text: Inspired by St. John of the Cross, 1542-1591.  
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Luke from Legion of Mary, leading us in Stations of the Cross



Fr Augustine blessing the palm leaves