

The Guest Speaker Rev. Fr. Josekutty Mathew CMF was briefly introduced by the Second V.P. Elizabeth Cheng. Rev. Fr. Josekutty Mathew came from India and had been in Hong Kong for nine years. He taught journalism in India before coming to Hong Kong and spent 2 years studying Chinese at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the Parish Priest of the Epiphany Parish and the Deputy Editor-in-chief of the Sunday Examiner. Rev. Fr. Josekutty Mathew CMF spoke on the "Joy and Significance of Youth Ministry".

A. Personal Background

He came from a very devout Catholic family in Kerala. There are four sons in the family which was very traditional. The family gathered together every day at 7:00 p.m. and spent 1.5 – 2 hours with reciting the Rosary and reading and sharing the Bible, followed by prayers for friends, priests, nuns, missionaries and church leaders. He and his elder brother became priests, and the two other brothers were bankers.

Nowadays, the families are smaller. They do not cherish respect and love for priest and nuns – so how can there be priestly vocations?

(B) Youth Ministry

Youth ministry begins at home. Often the parents are too busy and seldom spend time with their children. A family that eats (and prays) together stay together. Parents must promote youth ministry at home. Very few parish church has a youth committee. There are three reasons for this:-

- i. Parents do not provide enough support;
- ii. There is a lack of youth leaders;
- iii. Lack of financial resources

The Hong Kong Diocese has a fund raising for youth work. The offerings from all parish churches in one particular Sunday go to this. However, the money collected goes to the youth ministry at the diocesan level – nothing trickles down to the parishes. The Hong Kong diocesan English speaking youth commission was discontinued because of a lack of financial resource.

(C) Lack of Priestly Vocations

Very often, a parish priest is too busy and has little time to spend with the young people in his parish. A parish priest must recognize the importance of youth ministry. The mere presence of a priest is often enough to lead a young person to follow a correct direction in life and not goes astray. An adult must always walk with a young person when he is growing up. A priest and children with their parents can provide a good future for a young person.

This interesting and timely talk was followed by sharing from Serrans. The idea of evangelization through the cyber space was also suggested.