

CTIS NEWSLETTER



Inauguration Mass for 2017 Academic Year

CTIS held its Inauguration Mass to mark the beginning of the new Academic Year 2017. The Inauguration Mass was a joint celebration with St Francis Xavier Major Seminary on 12 January at St Mary Magdalene Room at Catholic Centre. The liturgical celebration was presided by CTIS Rector Fr James Yeo, concelebrated by SFX Vice-Rector Fr Valerian Cheong and Fr Philip Lai (CSsR), and joined by other priests and religious, academic staff, seminarians and lay students as well as members of the Board of Directors of CTIS. Highlights of the Mass included the Rector's Address and the Profession of Faith by our esteemed lecturers.



Fr James Yeo began his address on the theme from 1Peter 3:15 “to be always prepared to give an account of your faith to others” which he put forward as the very reason for studying at CTIS. Although some come to study for personal growth, some for a more effective ministry in the parish, some for curiosity, others to evangelise better, the ultimate reason is to be better equipped to give an account of your faith to others.

He said, “Giving an account of our faith is not exactly the same as evangelisation which is about the Good News, the kerygma. The systematic study of theology although based on the kerygma goes further to enable us to explain to others why we believe what we believe. It is about giving a rational explanation of our faith to others and also be able to defend the faith in a rational way. It is about the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*.”

Fr James emphasised that “This giving an account of our faith is very crucial in the context of Singapore where we have a multi-religious society and where one often hear of the merits and advantages of being a diverse society. But very often, it is precisely diversity that is the root cause of many of the problems of the world today. Diversity simply means that we are many and we are different, and so the necessary political virtue for diversity to exist is tolerance. But we want to move from tolerance to acceptance, to accept others who are different from us and not merely to tolerate them. For acceptance to happen, we need to turn diversity into religious pluralism. And for pluralism to happen, both inter-faith dialogue and ecumenical dialogue are essential.”

In your hearts, revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an account to everyone concerning the hope you have but do it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

On the point on dialogue, Fr James mentioned that “Dialogue does not set out to make everyone accept the same point of view. If everyone shares the same point of view, then pluralism in fact will disappear. Dialogue is the willingness to come to the table to listen to others, to listen to how they are different from us and to accept them just as we want them to accept us. It requires the commitment to reach out to others who do not share the same faith with us, not immediately with the intention of converting people, but to enable people just to understand why we believe what we believe.”

“For this dialogue to happen, we must be confident of our own faith and to know our own faith well enough to be able to enter into an academic debate or dialogue with people of other religions, even with our Protestant brothers and sisters. This is why students of CTIS must take their studies seriously and be the foundation for such dialogues to explain the faith systematically and logically. Even if you are not asked to enter into academic dialogue, it will still be useful when you explain to friends, neighbours, relatives, etc.”



Fr James made mention of an article by the theologian David Tracy entitled *The Uneasy Alliance of Theology* where he described 3 important elements in Catholicism – Mysticism, Intellectualism and Hierarchy. Church history has shown that if any one of these elements is weakened, the whole church is weakened.

Fr James commented that scholars, writers and theologians have all noticed that people are tending more and more towards the area of mysticism which focuses on experiences, emotions, healings, feelings, etc. Faith cannot be based on mere feelings or a feel good experience. Faith has to transcend feelings. Scripture tells us to love God with all our heart (experience part), with all our mind (intellectual part) and with all our strength (whole being, whole

disposition). Too often, people just go for for the feeling and downplay the intellectual part. We need all three though it may be an uneasy alliance.

At the same time, we must also accept that many questions in life have no answer, especially things in the spiritual world. Our knowledge about God is still superficial and theology cannot explain everything. Aquinas tells us that Theology must be studied on your knees in front of the tabernacle. Prayer reminds us of our nothingness before God whom we are trying to understand. Without prayer, wanting to know God seems like an act of arrogance but with prayer, we come to realise that it is only by grace that we can come to know God. God is knowable insofar as he chooses to reveal himself. And it is to mere children that the mysteries of God are revealed.

Fr James concluded that both our theological studies and prayer have the same goal, namely, to know God so as to love and serve him better. With that, he wished everyone, especially our students another meaningful, fruitful and transformational year of study at CTIS.

Theologians distinguish between **fides quae creditur** and **fides qua creditur**. The first refers to the objective, unchanging deposit of faith, the second to the subjective act of assent.

News about CTIS

During the Inauguration Mass on 12 January, the members of the Academic Faculty made a public profession of their Catholic faith which they will teach, expound and defend, in their work at CTIS. Their profession of faith was as follows:

Celebrant:

Let those who are to teach in this Institute come forward.

My dear brothers [and sisters] in Christ, I now call upon you to make a public profession of your faith, the faith that you will teach, expound and defend, in your work in this Institute.

Faculty:

I, (name), with firm faith believe and profess each and every article that is contained in the Symbol of faith, namely:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible ... *[Nicene Creed, continued]* ... I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

I also embrace and hold strongly each and every thing asserted and declared by the Church about the doctrine of faith and morals, whether by solemn definition or by the ordinary Magisterium, as they are propounded by Her, especially those that concern the mystery of the Holy Church of Christ, His Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Primacy of the Pope.

Celebrant:

You have professed your faith before the Church. We too are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All:

Amen.



Statistics of CTIS student population for Academic Year 2017

The enrollment statistics for Semester 1, 2017 is showing a downward trend as only 22 lay students were enrolled in the latest intake. Total enrollment (including seminarian and religious students) is as shown in the box below:

<u>English Stream</u>		<u>Mandarin Stream</u>	
Certificate-in-Theology	113	Certificate-in-Theology	27
Diploma-in-Theology	49	Adv. Diploma-in-Theology	30
Adv. Diploma-in-Theology	10	Total	57
Total	172		

Graduation Ceremony 2017

This Graduation Ceremony this year will be held at the auditorium of Church of St Teresa on Saturday 18 February, followed by a buffet lunch. The event will be presided by Archbishop William Goh who will present the awards to all the graduands.

把握中国社会的时代讯号

陈宾山神父

梵二的《论教会在现代世界牧者宪章》要求教会向世界“学习”并把握“时代讯号”，为能从事“福传工作”（evangelization）。¹ 鉴于此，我们尝试对中国“改革、开放”30多年的历史加以研究、分析，以期扑捉到其时代讯号。

参与、推动中国社会巨变的是农民工而直接享受其经济成果的是“80后”。“农民工”既是职业也是身份的表达。作为主体的农民工处在职业和身份的尴尬局面中，他们是“两栖”性的：身份上是农民而职业却是产业工人；在他们身上发生了“本体性价值”变迁²：由“农民”转化成的农民工接受了城市中的新的生活方式和文化理念，注重个人的利益和感受。这一些的变化摇撼了以“孝”为根基的传统宗族社会。“80后”是当代中国的一道文化景观。³其显著特点是消费而非工作，是享受而非付出，是个性张扬而非传统、保守。“青春、都市、网络成为‘80后’消费文化的三大标杆，集中地体现了一种世俗浪漫主义的消费精神”。⁴“80后”的当代青年处在感性和理性，当下和未来以及自由和事实的巨大张力中，他们无法在个性、自由、感性幸福和团体、责任和精神的价值诉求之间取得平衡。作为社会良心的知识分子也经历了巨变：从上世纪80年代的“文化热”，90年代后期以市场导向的消费社会文化，到90年代后期的“媒体知识分子”：如“文化口红般的随笔散文（余秋雨）、心灵鸡汤式的人生哲理（于丹）和大话化的历史故事（易中天）”。⁵

在“农民工”的身上体现出的是“本体性价值”变迁：传统的“传宗接代、养老送终”的、以团体为中心的价值观被正在崛起的“个人主义”价值观所抵制或取代，正是“80后”生活的坐标：要消费而非工作，要享受而非付出，要个性张扬而非传统。知识分子也从上世纪80年代的以人为中心的“伤痕文学”、“反思文学”转化成了“性的文学”，文学就是人的性快感的宣泄工具。

总而言之，这是一个人获取自由、利用自由和认识个人自由限度的过程；人认识到自由的悖论：形式上的无限和实存上的有限。面对自由的悖论，人能从中聆听到那来自绝对自由的呼声吗？在信从中获得从“自我肯定”和“无信”⁶的奴役中的释放。

¹ 参阅《论教会在现代世界牧职宪章》，44号。

² 参阅宋静：“从新制度主义观点看中国农民身份制度的变迁”，在：《前沿视野》，2008年4月，58页。

³ 参阅郭景萍：“‘80后’消费文化特征：世俗浪漫主义”，在：《当代青年研究》，2008年3月，7页。

⁴ 参阅《论教会在现代世界牧职宪章》，44号。

⁵ 陶东风：“新时期三十年人文知识分子的沉浮”，在：《探索与争鸣》，2008年3月，18页。

⁶ “普世社会科学研究所”的研究员刘鹏在《领导者》2009年6月号刊登了“中国崛起的软肋：信仰”一文，他指出：“今天的中国之所以有各种令人发指、匪夷所思的乱象、之所以正气不张、各种丑恶现象从声不断，不是因为我们穷、没有钱，而是因为我们失去了信仰！”（刘鹏：“中国崛起的软肋：信仰”，在：《领导者》，2009年6月，总第28期，3页）。