



Grapevine

A word from the Editor,

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And welcome back to the May edition of your monthly Grapevine!

We thank you all for the positive feedback to our new look, and we hope that you'd be pleased with the part-2 continuation of our interview with Dr Rilly Ray on her work in Kenya! In addition, we bring you the up-to-date (nope, this ain't the online Medical reference link) on recent happenings, and upcoming events!

Holy Week is over, and I trust everyone had a prayerful month? =)

Is it just me, or is our church community expanding ever slowly and steadily? For some reason, I've started noticing more non-baptised church-goers in my own parish. Let's welcome them and encourage them on their faith journey! And of course, try to be model Catholics for them to follow – as our Resident Muse would like to remind us in his / her 2nd article this month...

Have a great month ahead!

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Bunch of happy people outside Mt Alvernia after HO Welcome Mass

From Kenya, with love...

(Part 2)

Q Did you go to other clinics in Kenya?

Yes I did. I made trips to 2 satellite clinics over 2 days, both an hour's drive along a very bumpy clay and sandy pathway. At those clinics, they only had nurses treating all the patients, yet they were managing remarkably well. The nurses were very competent with their medications, treatments, deliveries of babies and minor surgical procedures. I really learnt a lot working with them.



A case I saw in this clinic was a girl of 15 who swallowed insecticide and became unconscious. She was intercepted by her mother as she was eloping with her boy friend on a motorcycle to Mombasa, a neighbouring city. Her mother wanted her to continue her studies in a secondary school which she refused as she was in love and wanted to get married.



There were similar cases in other parts in Kitui where girls became single mothers and ended up in a life of misery as the boys often disappeared after the one night stands. Many of such babies were also infected with HIV/AIDS. So there are a number of women in their twenties who are mothers to 5-6 children and suffering a life of poverty and diseases.

Q What is the health status in Nairobi?

Generally the health status is poor due to poverty. Common health problems include malaria, childhood infectious diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, HIV/ AIDS and malnutrition due to acute poverty.



Many are unable to afford the travel costs to a healthcare facility and the accompanying costs of treatment. The infant mortality and maternal mortality rates are high. Children are orphaned as their parents died from AIDS. Women and men become single parents when their spouses die from AIDS. Children under 5 die from childhood infectious diseases.

Q Did you manage to explore the areas outside the hospital?

Yes! The countryside was beautiful and in some parts gorgeous. The countryside had a varied appearance. Some parts were dry and the vegetation was dying from drought. Other parts were green with flourishing growth of maize, wheat and cassava. Land was undulating with valleys and hills stretching far into miles away with isolated huts scattered here and there, sparsely populated.

Farmers were taking their cows, goats and donkeys along the roads to graze afar. The wide space enables one to breathe fresh air. There were no tall buildings as in a city. I loved it. It was very refreshing indeed.

Q Speaking of farmers, how were the people?



The people were warm, loving, caring and very hospitable. They shared what they had and gave me the best they could. They appreciated a lot for the little I did. I was really touched.

They eat maize (a preparation called ugali), cassava, potatoes, beans and rice. They cook lamb in a special curry that has no spices like we have, and yet tasty. I

liked the food and especially the chapatti-like bread prepared from wheat.

The people are fond of dance and songs using the drums and tambourines. The secondary school children performed simple dances at mass during the introduction, offertory and concluding rites. The mass was very lively and interesting. The children said the prayers aloud, sang in harmony without books and music notes. Mass was very alive and the Lord must have been smiling proudly in Heaven!

Q Any final thoughts to share?

Although the country is poor, the people are very kind, loving and happy. They greeted me on the roads near the hospital with warm and firm handshakes. They were so grateful and caring even though they had very little and far less than what we have. The experience was indeed worthwhile as I experienced genuine love among God's poor here.

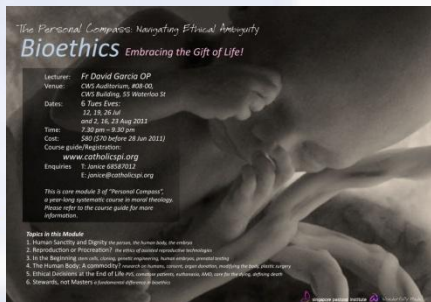


I strongly recommend you to work there, to take a month's break from the stresses of Singapore life - to experience the wonderful work you can do there and feel the love and appreciation of the poor. Once you have felt that love, you'd want it for a longer period. Just give it a try. You pay only for the airfare and for the voluntary work there - boarding and food are free. Airfare by Emirates for me was about S\$3000.

If you are interested, please get in touch with me (rilly@singnet.com.sg). May God encourage you in your prayers to render this service for the poor in Africa. God bless!

† **Upcoming Events:**

1. Personal Compass: Navigating Ethical Ambiguity



- Date: 12th, 19th, 26th July, 2nd, 16th, 23rd August 2011
- Time: 7.30 - 9.30pm
- Venue: CWS Auditorium, #08-00, CWS Building, 55 Waterloo St
- Lecturer: Fr David Garcia,
- Cost: \$80
- Register: www.catholicspi.org
- Enquiries: Janice (68587012, janice@catholicspi.org)

Core module 3 of Personal Compass continues in July with "Bioethics - Embracing the Gift of Life".

This module is vocationally relevant for all medical, nursing, allied and life science professionals, researchers, policy makers, teachers and students; and of particular personal value for all who who have someone they care deeply for; whether at the beginning of life, at its end, or somewhere in between.

Details at the website above!

2. CMS / CMG Fellowship Dinner

- Time: 2nd July 2011
- Venue: *to be confirmed*

If you've missed our Welcome Mass for the new HOs, here's another chance to catch up with everyone, and meet some of our new M1s! =)

† **What's New on Doctor's Blog:**

▪ **"Notes from Salzburg on Good Friday" & "What It Means"**

This Easter, we have a special treat for you – 2 pensive poems from budding poets amongst us!

Our regular poet, "Hoping to Inspire", pens a moving piece revolving around her relationship to God; while Deanna's inaugural piece explores Jesus's sacrifice, and what it means to her.

So even though Holy Week is behind us, let us never forget the sacrifice He made for us, so that we may be given eternal salvation.

▪ **"Of Angry Birds and Cowardly Mice..."**

Missed our resident muse? He / she's back with a brand new article! So kick up those heels and enjoy her take, on issues that's getting people (or is it just him / her) all worked up! =)

[Full articles](#)

May 2011 - HO Welcome Tea/Mass

This year's HO Welcome Tea was held on 2nd May 2011, at Mt Alvernia Hospital Lecture Room.

It was really heartening to see so many familiar faces – both juniors and seniors alike, who made time to come down and share with one another.

Sharing on what it meant to be a Catholic doctor and what HOship was for each of them, everyone took the opportunity to catch up with each other and swap "horror stories" over tea.



Wrapping up the tea was a short segment on common ethical dilemmas that we may face daily in our

lives. As evening drew near, everyone adjourned to the chapel for mass celebrated by Fr David Garcia.

Here's wishing all our new HOs a smooth and fruitful work year ahead! May God work through you to bring peace and healing to your patients!

† Regular Events:

1. **BYOB (Bring your own Bible)**

- Time: 18th May, 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd June 7.30pm
- Venue: CANA, 2nd floor CWS building, 55 Waterloo St

Join us for our weekly BYOB sharing and fellowship, held on every Thursday except the last Thursday of the month!

2. **CMG Monthly Mass**

- Time: **29th June**, 7.30pm, Wednesday
- Venue: CSCC Level 9, Solomon's Hall, CWS building, 55 Waterloo St

*Apologies for the error in April's Grapevine! Our regular monthly mass held on the last Wednesday of each month, will return in **June!***

3. **Outram Campus Weekly Mass**

- Every Wednesday, 12.15pm
- Venue: Medical Alumni Association Hall, Level 1 (Junction of College Road & Outram Rd)

More details [here](#)



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