

# 去了進修，並非垂釣遊玩

歐神父的話

當年紀漸大，我們所著重的不應只是家庭、朋友、健康和工作，而是應該將時間多放在照顧我們的信德上。忽發奇想：既然所有人都能上天堂，在天堂上才把時間給天主；不成嗎？但，如果事實不是如此，又怎辦呢？我們必須認真想清楚在最後審判時，我們要向天主交代我們一生為了天主的榮耀，如何善用祂賦予我們的恩寵。天主召叫每一個人作祂的子女。每一個人也有個人的人生目標和召叫。基本上，一些男士被召叫作司祭聖職，而一些男女被召叫奉獻聖善修道的一生，去拓展天主的神國。大部份男女被召叫作夫妻，按天主的旨意成為父母。

我三十年前進入修院，現在正是時候去反省和更熱切祈禱，讓我的靈魂能安然與主一起。經溫哥華總主教 Michael Miller 的准許，我可暫離現在的崗位，去我最珍惜地球的一角 — 耶路撒冷 — 進修。自 1991-1992 年在耶路撒冷學習歸來後，就沒有再回到天主聖言的發源地學習。雖然我已讀了整部聖經多遍，也多次帶領往聖地 11 至 17 天的朝聖團朝聖；看來也太理想和浪漫了吧 — 我已是急不及待要舊地重遊，重涉耶穌走過的足蹟、呼吸同祂一樣用過同一的水源、吃那同一產地的食物、在祂行過奇蹟的地方默想、在祂可能睡過的地方睡覺；而最重要的是，我很感恩可以像馬爾大和拉匝祿的姊妹瑪利亞一樣，可以在那恩待的地點，聆聽祂來自天上、獲得罪之赦和永生的聖言。

我的聖召是當神父，因此沒有比活在耶穌內更有價值。正因如此，我切望去幫助別人去認識世上唯一救主的祂。靜休進修不是重新評估，神父應該抽出時間去反省在天主眼中的自己。當然這也是學習的時候，但並不是工作坊。神父需要反省和祈禱，以期在聖主眼中是聖潔的。如古老的格言「神父並不能獨自上天堂」，因為他要帶領信眾一起。同樣地，神父也不會獨自下地獄，他定會連累其他信眾同往 — 多

麼可悲啊！請看猶達斯依斯加略：他不僅被祝聖為神父，甚至是一位主教。如果他做得好，他與其他宗徒無異。相反，他出賣了耶穌，並糟蹋了自己及他人的救贖。

我的兄妹笑說，我這個年越五十的老神父，竟然和年輕的修生和其他修女，同級學習。聽去似乎有點病態、有點不可救藥。我亦不能否認一些事實：我的記憶力不如前，又要向總主教遞上學習成績表（雖然不是應徵求職），但作為一位主任司鐸 — 特別是加拿大殉道聖人天主堂的主任司鐸，已是我的榮幸和喜樂，亦樂於如此。即使我將要離開至明年，我仍是堂區的主任司鐸。請放心，我不會到別處去。

在八月及九月，我將會在星期一至五上午九時至下午三時上密集的希臘文課。之後，日間上聖經班，而晚上兼修希伯萊文。有些班用英語上課，有些可能以意大利語和法語上課。我很感恩可以下榻主教府，和拉丁禮儀宗主教（耶路撒冷主教）及他的神父們住在一起 — 這並不是常見的事，蓋他們一般不會接待外來的神父；因此希望他們喜歡在阿拉伯文化中加一點點中國色彩。

有些人問我為何要學習希臘文和希伯萊文。舊約是以希伯萊文書寫，新約則以希臘文寫成。儘管天主教本身有最好的拉丁文譯本（由聖熱羅尼莫在四世紀時翻譯），但最好還是以希伯萊文和希臘文去了解耶穌的話的真正意義。在修院時我也學過拉丁文、希臘文和希伯萊文，但已是三十年前的事了。因此進修是必須的，才能更好地去品嚐聖經。

## 再談語言的思緒

每個人語言上的溝通，始於嬰孩時牙牙學語。我雙親用廣東話交談，我慈祥的祖父母說的卻

是台山鄉語。我和兄長都在印度出生，故此，我們都跟隨父母偶爾用孟加拉語交談。這開始了我學習不同方言的機遇。

1978年我來到加拿大，雖然這裡採取英、法雙語制作為官方語言，但在中學時，我不把法文放在心裡；只是，當我旅遊法國時，頓時感覺到學習語言的重要。當時不諳法語的我，居然有勇氣在巴黎跟計程車司機討價還價車資！之後，有幸在巴黎停留了一個夏季，努力學習法文。

中學時學習西班牙語，大學時又學習了三年日本文。母親和兄長還以為我學習日本文，是為了追求日本女學生，家人甚至以為我和日本女朋友鬧翻了，萬念俱灰，才入修院修道。唉，有趣！對不起，我從未交過日本女朋友，學習日本文全是為了在畢業後，將來進入社會從商。

在修院時，要進修拉丁文、希臘文和希伯來文，而我認為拉丁文較容易學懂，所以特別喜愛聖多瑪斯的拉丁著作。在羅馬和歐洲其它地方唸書時，街上拉丁文的標語，絕難不到我。

回顧1991年在耶路撒冷時，我不能完全掌握到很多的阿拉伯語；原因是課堂內的方濟會會士，均用意大利語授課，那是他們普遍用的語文。拉丁文、法文和意大利文，基本上有相似的共通點；熟悉拉、法兩語的我，要學懂意大利語是容易的事。

記得在耶路撒冷考試時，多是「口試」而非「筆試」。在十至十五分鐘內，教授們用意大利語滔滔朗朗、連珠發炮般地發問，不可謂不是精神威脅；這樣，他們會很快便知道學生懂不懂答案，遇到稍有憐憫心的教授，或者會對考生作出些提示。

當我表現以意大利語作答的能力時，教授馬上提問另一條問題。其實難者並非問題本身，而是教授的意大利語帶著重重的西班牙口音，使我聽得連番叫苦。記得考試時，我不知不覺地用廣東話回答教授神父的問題。尷尬！

二十年前晉鐸後，要每兩主日一次，前往基督聖體堂舉行廣東話彌撒。噢，我才發覺我的廣東話很恐怖！我曾很努力學習不同語言，竟然冷落了 my 母語。坦白說，學習廣東話不難，要精通卻非加把勁不可；到底，廣東話的歷史和文化，源遠流長。我努力又實習了一段時間，取得一些進步。之後，張必剛神父介紹一位從北京移民來溫哥華的老師，私下教授我學習普通話。

在擔任溫哥華綜合醫院院牧後，再返回羅馬進修。回來後，在天主恩恤下，我被調派到在我的母堂、唐人街的聖方濟堂。於是，我又可以再浸淫在華文的圈子裡。

### 學習語言的主因

2003年至2005年、在聖方濟堂服務期間，我特著懂些波蘭語，曾用了一年時間學習俄語。由於我本身對俄語不太感興趣，所以腦海記憶不深。

我有興趣學習不同語文，因為能幫助我去認識和珍惜不同人性的美麗與脆弱。我們言語的表達，能引發別人的喜怒哀樂。人類是天主迷人的受造物，甚者，天主願意派遣祂的聖子耶穌基督來救贖我們，使我們成為祂的子女。我們向天主呼號的言行，顯出人心殷切渴求一個愛人的天主。因為呼號的言行是那麼強而有力，故此，我對禮儀的表達，是認真的、謹慎的；至於人類聖樂的表達，更能響徹寰宇、昂登大雅之堂。作為天主子女，我們應把最好的獻給天主，遵循二千多年教會的傳統，向祂致以合宜的崇敬。

我希望多認識希臘文和希伯來文，以期能多明白天主的聖言；最重要的是，認識天主的聖言，可以幫助我多祈禱、多愛祂，因為祂不咎我罪，降尊就卑從天降下，施恩救贖；同時亦幫助我成為加拿大殉道聖人天主堂更好的本堂神父。

聖母瑪利亞，上智之座，為我等祈！

# Away on Sabbatical, but Not Gone Fishing!

*Reflection of Fr. Au*

As we get older, one of our concerns should not just be our family, friends, health, our works. We rarely take time to take care of our faith. Somehow, by some strange idea that everyone is going to make it to heaven, and we can give time to God when we get to heaven. But, what if this is not true? We really need to take time to think that on Judgment Day we have to give to God, an account of the life and all the divine graces that we have given in this life for His Glory. Everyone is called by God to be his sons and daughters. But, everyone has their purpose in this life, their vocation. Basically, some men are called to the priesthood, while some other men and women are called by God to consecrate their life for the sake of God's Kingdom. Many are called to be husband or wife, and God willing, to be father or mother.

Since I entered the seminary 30 years, it is time to reflect and pray more earnestly that my soul is alright with God. With the permission of the Archbishop Miller of Vancouver, I got the permission to be away from my present duties to study in one of my most treasured places on earth - Jerusalem. Since I studied in Jerusalem back in 1991-1992, I have not studied the Word of God in its actual location for many years. I have read the bible many times and have taken people to pilgrimage to the Holy Land for 11-17 days. Perhaps it may sound too ideal or romantic, I cannot wait to walk the road that Jesus had walked; to breathe the air that He once breathed; to drink the water that He once drank; to eat food from the ground that He once ate; to meditate on the places where he performed miracles; and to sleep in the place where He may have laid His head. Most importantly, it is a great blessing that I can be like Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, to be at the privilege place where I can hear his Word. The Word that came down from heaven is to save us from our sins and to give us eternal life.

As it is my vocation as a priest, nothing should be more valuable than living in the Presence of Jesus. And because of this, I am empowered to help others to come to know Him, as the only Saviour of the world. A sabbatical is not an evaluation, but priests should take time away to reflect where we stand in the sight of God. Certainly, it is a time to study, but it is not really a workshop. Priests need to reflect and pray in a way that we can come clean in the sight of the Divine Master. As the old maxim says, "a priest does not go to heaven alone" because he will bring others with him. In the same vein, a priest never goes to hell alone. He always brings others with him. And what a sad tragedy. Just look at Judas Iscariot: he was ordained not just as a priest, but a bishop. He could have done so much good, like the rest of the apostles. Instead, he betrayed Jesus and ruin his and other people's salvation.

I know that this sounds a little morbid, but we cannot avoid certain realities. Of course, it is not about doom and gloom. It is going to be exciting time. My brother and sisters were joking that imagine a 50 something years old priest is going to be in the same classes as other seminarians and religious sisters. I am sure that it is going to take me longer to remember things. Even though I have to hand in my report card to the Archbishop, but it is not a test that I need to get some other jobs. It is already my privilege and joy to serve as Pastor, especially, at Canadian Martyrs Parish. I am really happy with where I am. Even though I will be away until next year, I am still officially the Pastor at this parish. Rest assured that I am not going anywhere.

I will be taking intensive Greek Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. from August - September. Then, I will be taking biblical classes during the day and Hebrew part-time at night. Some of my classes are in English, but some maybe in Italian and French. I am very blessed to be staying with the Latin Patriarch/Bishop of Jerusalem and a few of his priests. This is rather unusual. They don't usually have priests to stay inside, if it is their own priests. So, I hope that they may enjoy a little more Chinese influence in their Arab culture. Someone asked me why I need to study Greek and Hebrew. Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament, and Greek is the language of New Testament. Even though as Catholic, we have the best translation in Latin, that is put together by St. Jerome in the 4th century, it is still essential to know Hebrew and Greek to get to know the meaning of some of the sayings of Jesus. In the seminary, I have taken Latin, Hebrew and Greek already. But, that was almost 30 years ago. So, a refreshed course is necessary, so to better appreciate the Sacred Scriptures.

## **Some thoughts about languages**

Every child has to learn to how to talk. My parents spoke Cantonese, but my maternal grandparents spoke another dialect. Then, of course, my parents will use some Bengali to speak to us, since my eldest brother and I are both born in India, like our parents. Ever since I was young I have to learn different languages. Since we came to Canada in 1978, English and French are the standard. I didn't pay much attention to French in secondary school, until I got a chance to travel in France. Then, I realize how important languages are! I remember bargaining with the taxi driver in Paris. I thought to myself that was courageous to argue in a language that I do not full command. Then, I was privileged to study in Paris for one summer. What a blessing!

I begin to learn Spanish at high school and college. I even took Japanese for 3 years when I was at UBC. My mother and brother thought that I was dating some Japanese girlfriend. But, the truth is that I was taking Japanese for business. Sorry. I never had a Japanese girlfriend, even though my family thought that I entered the seminary because I broke up with a Japanese girlfriend. How funny!

Then, for seminary studies, I had to take Latin, Greek and Hebrew. I found Latin is way easier to study than in any of the languages. I really enjoy St. Thomas Aquinas' writing in its original Latin. When I was studying in Rome and other parts of Europe, I was deciphering different signs that are written in Latin.

While studying Jerusalem back in 1991, how could I not pick up some Arabic? The difficulty was that my class in Jerusalem was taught in Italian, which was the common language for the Franciscan friars who were my teachers at that time. Having learned Latin and French, it was relatively easy. The key word is "relatively". I still remember a funny moment at one of my exams in Jerusalem. For exams, it was often "oral", instead of written. So, the professor could ask you as many questions as possible with 10 to 15 minutes. If the professor is kind, he could help you to give some hints. But, if the professor were tough, then, he would try to find out as fast as possible what you don't know. As soon as I showed some ability to answer a question, the professor could change question right away. Of course, moments during exams are nerve wrecking. Imagine, I had to speak Italian to answer questions from a professor who has heavy Spanish accent. I still remember that I came out speaking Cantonese. That was awkward!

After my priestly ordination 20 years ago, I was sent to Corpus Christi Parish and started bi-weekly Mass in Cantonese. Oh, how horrible was my Cantonese. I put effort learning in every other language, but not my mother's tongue. I improved my Cantonese somewhat. Honestly, it is a language not too hard to learn, but required a lot of effort to get better because Cantonese is such a language with such great history and culture. Then, I even picked up Mandarin from a teacher who is from Beijing by Fr. Chang, the Pastor at St. Francis Xavier. Later, I was sent to be the Chaplain at Vancouver General Hospital and then back to Rome. But, I kept up my Mandarin class. By Divine Providence, I was sent to my home parish, St. Francis Xavier, which was still in Chinatown. I was glad to pick up my Chinese again.

## **Main Reason to learn Language**

When I got assigned to St. Francis Xavier from 2003 to 2005, I even tried to spend a year learning Russian because I thought I had some knowledge in Polish. But, I did not remember much Russian because I am not really interested in language per se. I am interested in learning languages because it really helps me to appreciate humanity in all its beauty and its frailty. Our expression can lead others to joy or sadness, and to words of love or of anger. Human beings are such fascinating creatures of God that even God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to redeem us to be sons and daughters of God. Our cry to God in words and in signs show greatest urge in our human heart for the thirst of a loving God. Words and signs are powerful. Therefore, I am so careful with liturgical symbols and signs and even Sacred Music because human expression can reach great height of grandeur. As God's children, we must give God, the best and the most appropriate way in our worship to God, as guided by the Church's 2,000 Years of Tradition.

Hopefully, knowing more Greek and Hebrew, it may help me to understand God's Word. Most importantly, knowing the Word of God can help me to pray more and love Him more because he came down from heaven for the salvation of men. And then, I can be a better Pastor for the People of God at Canadian Martyrs Parish.

Mary, our Hope, Seat of Wisdom, Pray for us!

