

NEWS

Singaporean medical doctor wins top theology prize in Melbourne

By Nick Chui

DR COLIN ONG, 34, a Singaporean doctor currently pursuing full time studies at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family in Melbourne was awarded the institute's George Cardinal Pell Prize for being the top student for the 2008-2009 semester. Dr Tracey Rowland, dean of the Institute, awarded the prize to Dr Ong at the Institute's annual academic dinner.

Dr Ong, who decided to study fulltime for a Masters Degree in Bioethics at the Institute, shared that he felt "humbled and encouraged" at winning the prize. Some years ago, he was deeply touched by Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. His teaching, shares Dr Ong, "set me free in my masculinity and revolutionised my image of the Church. Hence, I wanted to know more about what the Catholic Church taught and found that the topics that I was interested in were available at the John Paul II institute in Melbourne."

He went to Melbourne for full-time study in July last year. Dr Ong studied the theology of the body, bioethics, sexuality, moral theology and anthropology. He is hoping



to complete a Master's thesis exploring the role of the theological virtues in medical practice and to continue to serve the Church in these areas in the future.

Indeed, Dr Rowland, whom Dr Ong has taken classes with, shared that what makes him stand out is the fact that he brings a wealth of professional experience as a medical doctor to his study of bioethical issues. "Many bioethicists", shared Dr Rowland, "lack the hands on clinical experience while many doctors lack the time and theological training to grasp the moral dimensions of their practices. Dr Ong however is working at the intersection of medical practice and bioethics. When he finally gets through all these studies, he will be a model Catholic doctor." □

Young artist paints for the greater glory of God

By Darren Boon

darren.boon@gmail.com

SINGAPORE – A painting to commemorate the feast of St. Ignatius was blessed by Jesuit Father Philip Heng on Aug 8.

The painting titled "Sinners, yet called to serve" features St. Ignatius of Loyola inviting all peoples (depicted by a man) to join the saint in his mission to serve all peoples in all places and at any time for God's greater glory. The saint holds a book with the Jesuit motto, "Ad majorem Dei gloriam", Latin for "For the Greater Glory of God".

The man in the painting, despite having a physical disability (representing the congregation's unworthiness and imperfections), accepts St. Ignatius' invitation, casting away his crutches and moves forward with the faith that God will always provide.

The Trinity suggests St. Ignatius's vision at la Storta (Rome), a definitive event in the founding of the Jesuit order. The dome of St. Peter's reminds us of the Jesuit vow of obedience to the pope.

Alvin Ong, 20, from Church of St. Francis of Assisi, took two-and-a-half months to complete the 120x180-centimetre acrylic on canvas painting.

Mr Ong had been inspired to use his talents to work on a religious painting after attending a Youth in the Spirit Seminar in 2008. He approached Church of St. Ignatius and after several discussions with the parish, it was decided that the feast of St. Ignatius would be a fitting time for a painting. To put the painting in the context of their parish, the parish altar is also painted in.

Although Mr Ong read up extensively on St. Ignatius and the Jesuits, it was a "daunting task" being his first time working on a religious painting



and painting many human figures while managing the needs and requests of the client.

"In the end it was all worth it," Mr Ong said, "it's a bittersweet and indescribable feeling for me to see the work lifted up to the greater glory of God". □

DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

"The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to His harvest." (Matthew 9:38)

Let us come together as the **BODY of CHRIST** to pray for more **PRIESTLY VOCATIONS!**

Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary • Saturday, 5 September 2009

An afternoon of Praise, Worship and Prayers for Vocations, starting at 2pm and ending with Mass at 6.15pm

Organised by the Diocesan Vocation Committee, St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary, Vocation Promotion Team of IHM and Serra Club of Singapore

