

We hosted God and His Friends once more

Chau-Hoan (Christine) Tran

On the recent 13th of October, my family had the honor of hosting God and his friends. Our monthly meeting this time was more special than unusual since we would have officials from CLC of New England and Exco come to have Holy Mass and dinner with us.

Though the initial plan did not have our home as the designated hosting location, the sudden change near the date of the event did not overwhelm or make me nervous. On the contrary, I found the news encouraging. First, I focused on the plan for our children. The meeting would be on October 13. The timing couldn't have been better for our children to learn about the appearance of the Virgin Maria in Fatima and the Rosary. Hence, my daughter and I would have specific projects to do throughout the week. We cut, pasted and colored paper images of the Sun, the Cross, the dark and grey clouds in preparation for the tales about the rain on the day the Virgin appear. We made the images of Hell, of small and large umbrellas, of a giant oak and tape it to the chair on which whoever play the role of the Virgin Maria would stand... We went shopping for small beads of all colors, tiny crosses for the rosaries. We counted the exact number of beads for each rosary, cut the string to the appropriate length, separated these pieces into 20 sandwich bags to make it ready when time came to make the rosary.

Our preparation came in handily. Finally, each of our children had a bag with all the necessary tools to make the rosary for herself. The older child guided and helped the younger one, waiting for each other, working like a team in their spiritual work. When finished, each child had a rosary and all five prayers for tens of hymns. I, then, told them about the appearance of the Virgin Maria, describing the scenes and coached them in their rehearsal for the roles they would play. At all stages, from the very initial preparing moments till the very end when seeing concrete results from our children, I kept reflecting about a lot of things: What would be the best way to help my children to see clearly what is Hell? What would be the best way to enlighten them, lifting their vision to a higher lever so that they can interpret for themselves the scenes of Heaven or Hell they encounter daily? What would be the best way to reveal to them that Heaven is at home when their grandparents, their parents and they themselves live harmoniously in a loving environment; that Hell is also at home when members of the family bitterly oppose one another, when one is provoked to do evil things?... What would be the best way to guide them so that they see the presence of the Virgin Maria in their lives so that they can seek solace when they are alone without their parents or relative? I had thought of Hell when we were drawing the picture of Hell where all the lost souls had no where else to turn except for the Rosary from the people on earth praying to God for them. When Tiffany, the child designated to read the play, held my hand and begged: "Aunt CH, please! May I change the word 'Hell' to the word 'Under world'?" "No", I said, "Please read exactly what is written!" Tiffany twitched her face unhappily: "Aunt CH, please! I can't, every time I read that word, I feel like crying! I don't like that word." Suddenly, I felt the silent tears in her innocent soul. How would it be possible for such a young and innocent child to feel pain and suffering when seeing the picture and the word "Hell"? It was such a touching moment for me!

When the monthly meeting upstairs finished, I had also finished the kids program. The people from CLC of New England had just arrived also. I was very happy seeing Ms. Clarivel's grown-up beautiful daughter. She brought another child with her. I first thought she had had another child, but then I later learned that the child was a fostered child! What a generous soul the Dragas family has! All the guests took a short rest

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She has been in Dong Hanh since 1994 and is now an active member in "Gia Dinh Thanh Tam"(The Sacred Heart Family Community) in central Massachusetts.

Christine is a full time mom with two children-- Theresa(ChauNgoc), five years old and Francis Xavier(HoangAn), three years old.

Her hobbies are arts and crafts and writing. She manages to do art work outside in their garden and also inside their 'sweet' home. She loves crafts, especially doing crafts with her own children and those in the group. She thinks she should have studies to be a teacher instead of a computer person("Ahhhhh, it was an ordinary path to a greater journey."). She loves all writing, especially any involving faith sharing or memories.

She feels that she 'speaks' with Jesus a lot with her pen.

and then after some whisperings, one followed another upstairs. Not knowing what they were doing, I followed them. When we were all upstairs, I found out that they were planning to pray for us since that day was also the 6th anniversary of our wedding. But the guest couldn't do it since my husband was still out in the street ordering more food and helping the car that was having the Exco officials on board.

I was both happy and worried when learning that the Exco officials' car was out-of-gas; Happy because I would have more time to prepare the pot luck, but worried because the Police might get to the broken car before my husband had enough time to bring gas there. It's really strange. Often, our pot luck would be well prepared and there would rarely be any need for anything. Today, however, was different. Things seemed to be inexplicably inadequate. We had to have extra trip to order more food. In addition, the children would have to practice their roles for the readings, the singing. Why wouldn't we have been more prepared for the kids in this part?

As I was thinking about the lack of preparation, the Exco group came. I blurted out: "We've got to charge you double, so I think you've got to pay us \$5 for each gallon". What a charmless sentence! what on earth...! I walked into the room with the feeling: "Everything was finally all set!"

Father John was the main figure with a touching sermon. The children had reflections on the story when father John was ten years old. Adults had reflections about the "out-of-gas" incident. I still remember vividly my thoughts then was very quick and very crisp: A car full of people with the gas meter's warning light up, but all passengers had ignored as if we had often ignored the "Warning signs of God". Not once, but many times. Why did the group decline Father Paul's offer of using his car the previous day? And did so again with Ms. Mary though she is a local resident? And again ignore the Gas Meter's warning light? Often God would give us plenty of warnings, but we had chosen to ignore those signs until it was too late and then when we were in trouble we would dare to open our mouth to complain: "Oh God, where have you been!"

Father Paul loved to listen to and read Vietnamese. He always asks for the meaning of each Vietnamese song prior to it being sung. Father Hanh was exceptionally humble and quiet.

When the Holy Mass was over, the children had performed a short, but touching play. The older children played the main role such as The Virgin Maria, the announcer, holders for images of the Sun, the Cloud, the shades for the Virgin. The younger ones from age 5 down to age 1 played the role of people holding umbrellas, images of clouds, holding hands in their parades. The whole

scene was lovely! When the play ended, all adults joined in singing "Once Upon a time, on the oak tree..." Their voices were soft, touching. Evon, the child playing The Virgin Maria still standing there with the rosary in her hand folded. Other children were still kneeling there.

Afterward, Father John said Fatima is this year's theme for all Christian Community in the country. What a coincidence!

After that splendid Holy Mass, the quiet environment broke into a noisy one not much different from the "Afternoon Flea Market". We often referred to it as a "tornado". The before and after scenes of our house helped to explain our term. Prior to the guests' coming, the house is well-organized and neat, but after the guests left, the house looked just like a tornado had gone through it. The destroying effects were staggering, utterly unpredictable! But I thought we needed this kind of tornado more often. Though the disorganizing effects were devastating on the outward, its building effects was spiritually enervating and empowering. Perhaps the best part was the joy that we had the honor to play host to God and his friends and our home had the honor of serving as a nest providing the rest for the tired, travelling birds coming to share with us their sorrows and joys in their experiences in their journey to see God. It was our honor to be able to receive the innocence and simple gifts from our children's souls. This house has received God himself!

All of the food were put on the table. We often use our long table to sit together, but today the entire long table was used for food. We spread out throughout the house. Finally, we had a table for all the kids right in the middle of the living room!. Ms. Kitty sat with the kids. She, herself, was a gift to them. She and the kids got along together extremely well. I joined them too. I didn't know whether all the kids were attracted to Ms. Kitty or it was the other way around. Kids would talk to her simultaneously. There were always at least five or six kids talking to her in different threads of conversations at once. It was almost impossible to figure out which of her answer was directed to which child. It seemed like she had no time to stand up for food nor she couldn't stop these endless, meaningless and none landing stories. Seeing that her dish was emptied while her conversations were still non-stopped, I took food for her as well. After a while, she disappeared with all the kids. Later, I learned that our kids took her to the third floor, the Ghost floor they called, (this floor will be asked permission to be prepared as a haunted house by the kids for Halloween), to scare her and she was really scared. She ran downstairs to hide and then got a chance to scare them back when she hid in the place we put our firewood for the winter. The sounds of kids shouting and laughing brought

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Reflection on a Gathering with ExCo

Mai (Jeanne) Phung

Meeting with ExCo CLC was a pleasure for me as an individual, for Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (Sacred Heart Family) as a big family, and for DONG HANH as a community. It's an honor of Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (GDTT) to have company with such a group of high officials at Holden on October 13, 2007. The joy was still here as I'm writing this reflection to share with you and others. May this feeling will never fade away as time go by.

I joined GDTT as a Dong Hanh member four years ago and it had changed my life completely. I'm looking at everything with different angles with the inner eyes of Love, Faith and Peace. Though playing neither any role in GDTT, nor Dong Hanh, I'm accepting myself as God has created me. When hearing that we have the high officials coming to join us, I was overwhelmed with joy and excitement about the projects of getting to know ExCo's high officials personally. I still remembered Mr. Hoang's worried face. His mind must have been filled with nagging thoughts of whether we would have enough foods, whether the tables could be set up conveniently or whether the house would be cleaned enough to welcome the guests. His running back and forth was just like when Chau Hoan was in labor. The news of the car with the ExCo 's officials on board ran out of gasoline had made him even more anxious! Right away, he was on mission to rescue them with a spare container of gasoline in his garage. All of his actions were full of energy and I can see how God's working at him so tenderly with a warm heart of welcoming our guests. He was just like Martha in the bible upon hearing that Jesus would come to visit her house.

While adults are meeting and sharing upstairs, I have a chance to be Chau Hoan's assistant. We watched and join with the kids' and toddlers' activities. I have my very own children as well. Alan is going to be 10 by December and Winona is 4 yrs old. There were 15 kids and toddlers together. We all made rosary and each of us made one for ourselves. I was quite sure this was the most peaceful time that kids could be silent and did their works, the process was time consuming, and it took patience and skills to complete a rosary. I had an opportunity to watch each and everyone in the face with many different expressions and I thanked God for his splendid creation of these wonderful small creatures! As I watched the kids rehearsing for the skit, it reminded me of my own memory when I was at their age, and in my heart I felt so much younger.

When ExCo's officials arrived we had our Holy Mass right way because I could hear everyone's tummy was rumbling. I was thankful to father John for a homily lesson about his car running out of gasoline on the road with many missed opportunities. In spite of offerings from both father Paul and Ms. Mary for the driving, in spite of the signal from the gas meter and in spite of seeing many gas stations on the highway,

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She is a senior staff accountant and is a single mother with two children, Alan, 10, and Winnona, 4.

She likes to watch drama and romance movies, listen to her son practice piano, swim, walk, spend time with her children.



A Meeting with CLC USA ExCo Members.

Minh Huy Bui

Minh Huy Bui is a member of Dong Hanh - Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (Sacred Heart Family Group) Worcester, MA

Minh is an electronic technician, is married to Tuyet Pham and enjoys writing and playing music, reading and playing tennis.

Since following the call of Dong Hanh, I have heard a great deal about the high officials of CLC, but I have never met any of these officials yet. This first meeting of mine with them seems to be just a coincidence. Personally, I think, it would be impossible for things in life to happen accidentally as coincidences. Coincidences happen perhaps due to some kind of special arrangements beyond our human perception.

When informed by our group leaders that the ExCo CLC's representatives would visit and meet with our group, I had a very special, yet indescribable feeling. Being in a position of a host, I think, it's not just only my responsibility but also my duty to prepare whole-heartedly for the reception. I confess that I was worried. It would be almost impossible to express my spiritual feelings and convictions proficiently or even intelligibly, given my limited English. Luckily, the schedule for the meeting that day didn't include the spiritual exchange session. The ExCo members only attended Holy Mass and had dinner with us. Conversations is thus, confined to daily life's topics. Thanks God!

When thinking about the meeting on that day, I still remember vividly the moments I was waiting for the ExCo's out-of-gas car on Highway. I had asked why it would even be possible for these high officials not to check on gas while travelling? I had suddenly thought of a paragraph from the Bible in which our Lord, Jesus often said: "When travelling, thou shouldn't have to worry about bringing money. When a host offers food, thou shall use whatever is offered...." Then, I had laughed out loud since I had never had such strange recollections since the day I got to the US.

When the ExCo members finally came, we greeted one another, shook hands and then attended Holy Mass together. It's unthinkable that we can all have Holy Mass in such a small house, so crowded with adults and children! The environment is lovely. That day, I had met my Lord Jesus, through Father John's sermon. Very brief, but vivid, his story to the children painted a lively picture of love and forgiveness. The story reminded me of biblical paragraphs in which Jesus taught and merged with all the children. I am sure that the children would remember well that story; that such a story would be like seeds thrown into the pristine lands of their innocent souls and would take roots there forever.

To grace the Mass, hymns with Vietnamese lyrics had been sung. During the singing, I heard voices singing in accents half Vietnamese, half English sounding a bit strange, but joyful. Prior to the singing, we had explained to the representatives the meanings of the selected songs. But we had never thought that the officials would actually join us in our singing. I admired them deeply for their graceful acts and told myself privately that if one day if the situation is reversed, I would definitely do the same regardless of how awkward my voice may sound during such an English hymn.

When dinner's time came, our tables were filled with pure Vietnamese Food, and the officials did not decline any course, including those which had been served with fish sauce. The scenes had made me think of the very first Holy Mass where all came forward to put their food on the table to share as if they all belonged to the same Great Family as our Lord God intended.

As with all other meetings in life, our meeting ends. We said Good Bye and promised we would meet again in the future. Some asked me to visit if there is a chance. One asked me to come to Alaska to visit. Perhaps, we all would remember

these special moments. Though we said Good Bye, within ourselves, we know it's not Good Bye. We share the same life; we follow the same spiritual path led by our Lord God.

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all of them were too busy with their conversations to see until it was too late. They then complained: "God why you abandon us when we need you the most?". Their situation resembles that of my own a few years ago. Then, I had believed that I could overcome all difficulties by myself, not realizing that God was walking with me. I had offensively ignored all of his warnings and signals until now. Looking back, I could see that I had a lot to thank God for those dark days of my life. Without them, I would never feel the love that God had for me and my family. My faith is grow stronger every day and I trust myself in the hand of God. I can see the destination of my life. I can also see that getting there would require a lot of sacrifices, patience, faith and transformation processes propelling me to overcome my true self.

Reflecting on the gathering, I'm thankful for all of the companionships, for all conversations, for the looks in the face, for the smiles that shine in the heart, and for the hugs, the warmth that we give to one another and the feeling as if we had known each other for a long time. As for the kids, they enjoyed as much fun as adult. I'm confident to say that because I saw their anxiety when we informed them about the meeting. They just couldn't wait and they would count every day till the gathering date. These moments were like the seeds that some day will take roots to grow and bloom to follow the good deed. Also, they brought so much dynamics to live and I'm glad that I have chosen a good path for my children to follow my foot step. I could see the next generation in Dong Hanh for the future is coming.

The best part was getting together with friends, meeting new peoples and enjoying each other 's company. All seemed to have united spiritually with Christ; especially the ExCc was a great treat for GDTT. I'm thankful for a wonderful lesson that would be a reflection of my life awhile in the past. It's true that God always watching all over ours and we have many things to be thankful for.....



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joys to us all. Having thought that the officials from the Exco would be all serious personalities, I could never imagine that they could have played along so well with children, they are down to earth more than I thought.

When saying Good Bye, an 83 year old (if I remembered correctly about her telling me of her age) official from CLC of New England had whispered to my ears: "I have a wonderful time. It makes me feel so young!" During the dinner I was worrying whether it was too noisy and crowded for her to enjoy anything! As often, we hated to part, especially more so this time, since we didn't know when we would have a chance to meet the Exco's officials in an informal place such as a home, and not at a meeting or a conference. Though I didn't remember all the visitors' names yet, but their faces and their graciousness had become indelible in my heart.

A Rare, Memorable Meeting

Van Xuan Nguyen

Van Xuan Nguyen is a member of Dong Hanh - Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (Sacred Heart Family Group) Worcester, MA

Van is an Information Technology (IT) Auditor. is married to Hanna Nguyen with two children. Yvonne 9 and Benjamin 7.

Van enjoys spend times with the family, reading, and cooking breakfast for the kids on days off and weekends.

In the meeting of Dong Hanh group of the North East region last July 2007, Mr. Liem had explained the difficulties the Dong Hanh community may encounter within the next few years when Christian Life Community® (CLC) USA change its organization making new adjustments in light of the reforms in the Society of Jesus Organization of the USA. One of these adjustments might be that the Dong Hanh groups at the local level might no longer operate directly under the Dong Hanh Central Office. These local groups would have to separate themselves and integrate with the regional CLC USA. I had met with Mr. Liem and told him: "Integration is impossible. Imposing integration would certainly lead to disintegration. We have to inform them about that!" Mr. Liem told me these difficulties are challenges that Dong Hanh might encounter within the next few years. CLC USA 's operations are often result oriented while we focus more on the spiritual and emotional aspects. This is the reason why the theme for this year is: "Throwing ourselves forward." Since when throwing ourselves thus, we would have to deal with a lot of risks. These risks may either strengthen or weaken ourselves. Though fully understanding this, Dong Hanh still has to throw itself forward to better prepare for what might lay ahead in the future. If CLC USA ExCo (Executive Council) decides to go ahead with integration, the Dong Hanh groups would encounter a great deal of difficulties due to language barrier, difference in customs and ways of life. The Dong Hanh groups would loose their identities and disintegrate. During the entire regional meeting session, I had silently presented my worries about the future difficulties of the Dong Hanh group to God.

After the regional meeting, too busy with normal issues of daily life, I soon forgot about these issues. It was not till last October that these issues came up once again. This time, instead of worrying, I was full of joys. Perhaps, God had understood mine and Mr. Liem 's worries about the potential future difficulties of Dong Hanh since I had presented these difficulties to him before. Rather than only understanding Dong Hanh abstractly from the descriptions of the Dong Hanh's staff members, perhaps it's God's intentions to have the CLC USA ExCo officials to witness and get a personal feeling for themselves about the activities of Dong Hanh via interacting directly with one of the small local group. I will elaborate on the plans and events leading to the meeting of Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (Sacred Heart Family), CLC NE (New England) and CLC USA ExCo officials below.

Gia Dinh Thanh Tam (GD TT) was deeply honored having had the opportunity to meet, converse and have Holy Mass with the "high officials" of CLC ExCo, including Ms. Ann Marie Brennan, the president, Ms. Kitty Gray, the Treasure and father John LeVecke, S.J., Ecclesial assistant. I believed that God had created this opportunity as a gift to GD TT. Why did I believe so? Since the meeting arose out of a series of completely unpredictable events. Normally, GD TT and CLC NE often held meetings at least once annually so that members could have discussions and enjoy different activities together. The annual meeting for this year as planned by Ms. Clarivel, the CLC NE 's coordinator and the coordinating group in May designated the potential Summer Gathering date to be somewhere between July and August. That plan did not materialize since there were a lot of activities in those two months such as Dong Hanh regional meetings, group annual retreat, a number of families had had their vacations pre-planned for those months already... Since it was impossible to have the Summer Gathering as planned, the date had been changed to the 6th of October and the event was renamed Fall Gathering. When the date drew near, Ms. Clarivel suddenly informed

both groups that CLC USA ExCo would come to New England from the 11th to 14th of October. The initial plan of the ExCo was to have conference at Dover in Delaware. For reasons unknown to us, that plan was changed again and the conference's location was changed to Boston Colleges. Seizing this rare opportunity, CLC NE and GDTT decided to postpone the Falls Gathering on the 13th of October so that they can meet directly with CLC USA ExCo. These were crucial events leading to this historic meeting. How wonderful was the Hand of God! Could it have been just as Mr. Liem said: "God is using the GDTT group as the ambassador for Dong Hanh and CLC USA."? Or just as Mr. Hao, the Group's Guide had said: "God is using GDTT for some of his purposes"?

Through our conversations in Google group email, though no one in our group had spelled out, we all understood that in the upcoming meeting, each and all members of GDTT would have a duty to show CLC ExCo that Dong Hanh is a special community whose membership includes the entire family, not just one or few members of a family. The idea of Dong Hanh (Journeying Together) is that not only a group of individuals journeying together, but the entire family would embark on a journey each helping the other following the spiritual light of St. Ignatius. Dong Hanh is not a group whose membership comprises of only one or few individuals of a family. Dong Hanh is also not a community focusing only on formations like some may tend to think.

I had had the opportunity to talk to Ms. Ann Marie and brief her that the monthly activities of the group include the parents as well as the children. The group does have a separate, customized program for children. The group wishes to familiarize the children with St. Ignatius's way of life during their formative years, to create loving, caring, healthy environment for their children. One of the group's goals is that their children will form their very own Youth CLC group during their teenager. If there is no healthy environment, the group feels that their children may be exposed to environments which may be spiritually harmful to them. In our roles as parents, we do not want to have our children exposed to those harmful environments. Ms. Ann Marie seemed surprised and interested when I told her that the children were looking forward to the monthly meeting even more than the parents. Sometimes, when we couldn't have group meeting for one or two months, they would remind me: "How come we didn't have any monthly group meeting yet, Dad? When's the new meeting?" On the meeting date, our children would constantly remind us about the meeting. They were afraid we would forget.

On that historic meeting date, when the Exco members came late because their car ran out of gas. I had thought: "Oh Lord! Could it have been possible that my guess would turn out to be true?" We often had a lot of meetings and as time went by, we tend to get one meeting mixed up with another except for the ones with exceptional events. Those meetings with exceptional events would stand out when there were need to refer to a specific meeting. Perhaps, it was for this reason that Father John declined Father Paul's invitation as well as Ms. Mary's invitation to use their cars. Further, it was just unexplainable that they all ignored the gas meter's warning signals. I believed it must have been God's intention to attach a special, exceptional event to the meeting so that none of us could ever forget this historic meeting.

These were just a few lines to recount all the main events leading to the meeting of GDTT and CLC USA ExCo officials, and a few of my own thoughts as a servant of the group.

From the Children

MY REFLECTION ABOUT CLC EXCO GATHERING WITH DONG HANH

*Alan Phung of Massachusetts -
10 Years old. 5th grade.*

I would like to share my moment about the gathering on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at Holden, Bac HoangHoan's house that was very blessed night for me. At first, we got to make a Rosary with string and beads with many color, they were very neat. I choose five difference colors for every 10 beads to completed my Rosary and each color is represent a prayer that I honor to the person who is with me or I haven't meet them yet. Here are the following 5 prayers on my Rosary:

1. I pray for my mom with full of health, love and strength to taking care of me and my little sister.
2. I pray for my grandmother is been sick and get well soon.
3. I pray for my little sister have a good behavior and not giving me hard time.
4. I pray for all the soldiers to come home safe from the war because they're protected our country for the freedom.
5. I pray for all the kids that unfortunate soon will find love and be happy.

When the American CLC came I felt glad and joyful that we had some visitors to fill the crowd. I also felt very excited that the president of the CLC was at the mass and the father John gave me and my friends a meaningful lesson about how to love my little sister and tell us about his childhood, I really enjoy his story and I'm glad that his sharing it some what make me know who I am. I have an honor to read the second reading that make me felt very good inside because it was my first time reading a scripture and the petition. I feel very proud. Also, the kids got to sing America the beautiful. It was fantastic. At the end of mass we did a play about Mary appear at the Fatima with the 3 children, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. I and Alphonse only helped with the curtain but I feel important as well because I'm part of it. The skit was great and I can see all adult was enjoyed with a big applauded.

The food was wonderful and I thank you for those blessing hand that make a delicious meal for us. I enjoy the food very much and eat until I can't eat anymore, as you can see I am a food lover and my mom used to call me a PIG. After meal and during social time we set up a hunted house to scare the adults and I'm glad that they're

joint us for the scary time. It was really cool that we did it with all the parents and the American CLC.

We had a wonderful time at the gathering. The best part was getting together with friends and enjoys each other company in Christ. I hope that you will be a CLC member to experience the joy that I'm having right now. May God Bless Us All.

With Love,

Alan

MY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

*Tiffany Tran of Connecticut -
10 years old. 5th grade*

Last month in Oct 2007, the CLC or Christian Life Community® came to have a meeting we have every month. All of the kids did rosaries, reflections and a play of Fatima. We all also had Mass that very day.

ROSARY:

We all did rosary. The colors I picked for my rosary were pink, purple, light blue, white and brown. I picked these colors because they are my favorite colors. These colors make me feel happy and be myself, when these colors care combined together.

What made me think that our rosaries were special because all if took was teamwork to make our rosary. God always taught us to be with one another, helping each other, and be in God's community. Together, my friends and I made our rosaries together. Teamwork helped make our rosary beautiful. I didn't care how the colors were combined; it was beautiful, because of teamwork!

REFLECTIONS:

After doing our rosaries, we wrote down 5 reflections on a pumpkin, I wrote:

- 1 For my family, to be healthy, happy and full of love forever.
- 2 For my aunts, uncles, cousins, let them be happy and be with God.
- 3 For the hunger, and homeless, let these people be with God and find food and shelter in God.
- 4 For animals and the world, for them to be happy and care for their families.

- 5 For the saints, angels and God, let them look after us forever.

These reflections are very helpful to me. My parents have taught me to care for others and always believe in God.

MARY IN FATIMA:

After our reflections, we did a play. The play was about Mary in Fatima. I was the narrator. The story was about 3 kids: Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. Behind these kids were about 78,000 people following them on Oct 17, 1917. Then out of nowhere, Mary appeared to them and showed them the underworld (hell). Everyone must pray the rosary to be in heaven with God. This play made me realize that praying the rosary will bring you up in heaven with God. Also if you pray for others, they will go up to heaven with God, because your prayers helped them. Remember, when you die, people will pray for you. You then should pray for others like you.

Pray the rosary and believe in God!

MASS:

After all of our kids' activities, we got together with our parents and the CLC group, and had Mass. My friends and I were the readers and singers. During the homily, the priest told us a story:

When the priest was 10 years old, he and his sister played together all the time, then one day his friends came over. His sister wanted to play with them, but the priest said no. John (the priest now) and his sister had a fight and soon, John pushed her and she got upset. It made me think of my typical 10 years of life right now. I have 2 siblings, a brother and a sister. I usually get anointed, and get mad at them. The story was just like a story I would tell if I were a priest!

ONE HEART, ONE COMMUNITY

*Yvonne Pham Nguyen of Massachusetts -
9 Years old – 3rd grade*

I loved the night that when we gathered together and had BLAST of fun and love, joy and laughter together. The other kids and I made our very own rosary and for our hard work, we got closer to Mary Mother of Jesus ! After we did our rosary, co Chau Hoan taught us how to pray

with the rosary and here are some of my prayers that I can remember:

1. I pray for my dad to stay healthy and strong to keep our family strong
2. I pray for my mom for her sickness to go away and to take care of me and my brother.
(And that is all I remembered Auntie Chau-Hoan filled out the rest, for she kept all my prayers)
3. For Ben to be good and learn in school
4. For my cousins and aunts and uncles to be happy in there lives
5. I pray for my mom not to be sick and live for a long time

The food there was great ! I thank you for all the food you (parents and the CLC members) made and I think you enjoyed the skit because of your loud applause! By the way, I was Mary in the skit, the most important member in the play, so I felt very proud to be Mary. I hope to see you (CLC NE members and Exco members) again soon, but for now God be with you!

MY THOUGHTS

*Jensine Tran of Connecticut -
8 Years old – 3rd grade*

When father John told a story about him and his three year old sister, he accidentally pushed her and she started to cry. Once his mother found out that father John had made her cry, he said to apology, when we did a play, I was Lucia, my sister Tiffany was the narrator, one our Halloween party, we had a Halloween fashion show, I hope you be kid, helpful and learn more about God.

Here were my prayers for the rosary that I did: (auntie Chau-Hoan filled out this part, for she kept all the prayers):

1. I pray for my mother to stay healthy
 2. I pray for my dad for him to do good when I drive the school bus
 3. I pray for my sister to do well in school
 4. I pray for my brother for him to get good grade
 5. I pray for my grandfather for him to stay alive
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MY THOUGHTS

**Benjamin Pham Nguyen of Massachusetts -
7 Year old – 1st grade**

I liked father John telling a story about him and his sister when he was a kid. I liked to make my own rosary. I picked the yellow beads for my rosary because yellow is my favorite colors. I like to go to Dong Hanh meeting every month so I can learn more about Jesus. Go Jesus. I Love You, Jesus.

MY THOUGHTS

**Travis (Nho) Tran of Connecticut -
9 Year old – 4th grade**

In the month of Oct 2007, CLC gathered together. We gathered once or twice every month. Us kids gather together and do fun activities. This month, we did a play, made a rosary and the prayers that I wrote were:

1. For my community, may they find healing and strength with God
2. I pray for my family, especially my parents who work very hard taking care of me
3. For those who had died. Especially my uncle whom has died on Christmas 2006
4. My friends, whom I love and care about
5. For people in the war, especially in Iraq.

And the most important of all, we had mass. Mass was very important in the CLC. The CLC was so much fun. We hope you (friends Travis has not met) can join to learn more about God.

REFLECTION ABOUT CLC GATHERING WITH DONG HANH

**Alphonse Le of Massachusetts -
10 years old – 5th grade**

My reflection of a CLC Gathering is a great one to share. I can remember all of the major events that happened. Let me start at the beginning.

When I came in, Tiffany (Thuong), Travis (Nho), Jensine (Nhu), Yvonne (Yvan) and Ben were already there. When the adults went upstairs to start their meeting, Bac Chau Hoan stayed with us to prepare for presentations. At first, we all made rosaries. Threading beads into small holes was a tough thing to do for me since I've never done

it before. People who do knit or thread must be very careful and requires a full patience that made me think how impatient I am! When we were in the middle of making our rosaries, Alan came. He was late but I was joyous anyway. He then jumped right in to making rosaries. When we were done, Bac Chau Hoan gave us paper pumpkins to write our prayers on. The prayers were divided into sections. The first prayer was for the 1st section of the rosary and so on. Here are my prayers:

1. For Mom, Dad, sister, me and our belongings to be safe
2. For Grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and their belongings to be healthy
3. For Friends and their belongings to be happy
4. For Other people in the world who need help; for them to be peaceful
5. For God, the saints, the disciples, the apostles, Mary, Joseph, and all Holy Religious

After we made our rosaries and wrote our prayers, we ate pizza and drank water for a snack. Some people went for seconds but I just ate one slice. While we were eating our pizza, Tiffany (Thuong) came up with the "Hello, This Is..." game. We pretended to be movie stars while talking about gossip in a bizarre voice. The game kept going throughout the evening.

Then, after all of that, we rehearsed for our play. The play was about the presentation of Mary to the world and how she told everybody to pray the rosary. I was picked for curtain management in the play and so was Alan. Although that part was a minor one, I was glad too since I do have a bit of stage fright. We kept rehearsing and rehearsing until all of the parents came down.

When the parents came down, they waited/rehearsed for the mass. The parents and children were waiting for the president of CLC United States and his associates to come. Unfortunately, we were informed that there had been a delay since the CLC president's car ran out of gasoline!

When they did arrive, we started mass immediately. Tiffany (Thuong) and Yvonne (Yvan) were picked to read the first reading while me and Alan were picked to read the second reading. For the responsorial psalm, the children sung "As a Deer Longs".

Then we did our play. I personally think it was a big success.

After the mass was done, there was picture time. I then started the idea of instead of saying "CHEESE!" for pictures, I convinced everybody to say "CLC"!

Then we all started eating. I had my first taste of pate-chinois. While we were eating at the kid's table, one of the

president's associates, Kitty, sat and talked with us. We were planning the scariest Halloween party ever.

After dinner, we invited almost everybody we know to our "Terror Territory Zone".

Everyone who went there said it was absolutely "scary" but that was just the beginning. Our main guest was, Kitty (the CLC treasurer), had revenge on us too. So, we nicknamed her "The Green Goblin". Soon after, everybody had to go home since it was the end of the day. I wished we could stay more but everybody had to go.

During the rosary making time, I felt joyful because I got to do arts and crafts with my friends. During the mass, I felt anxious because I got to read the second reading. During dinner, I felt thankful because I had food to eat while some people in the world don't have anything to eat at all so they starve. During Terror Territory, I felt excited because I was part of the action. Overall, I had a great day. I also had a lot of things to be thankful for since there was no failures on anything at all. I can't wait 'till next year!

Thanks friends to give each other's laughs. Thanks our parents to give us plenty of opportunities which we take for granted "*sometimes*". Thanks God for what you have done on me!