

# Cancer fighter and charity worker passes away

HONG KONG (SE): Camay Lam, a terminally-ill cancer patient who set up the Footprint of Grace, a Facebook page which worked with Church organisations to raise funds for the needy in different projects last year, died peacefully in the company of her family and friends on the morning of April 2. She was 48-years-old.

Her funeral Mass is scheduled to be celebrated by Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing at 10.00am on April 29 at St. Joseph's Church, Garden Road. The remains will be cremated at Cape Collinson Crematorium, Chai Wan, after a service by Father Patrick Sun Ing-feng.

Her family has declined gifts, choosing instead to donate all condolence money to Mercy Hong Kong, an organisation set up by Oblate missionary Father John Wotherspoon to help homeless people.

Lam's last charity project was the sale of Chinese New Year envelopes, designed with the Chinese calligraphy of Father Nicolas de Francqueville, to raise funds at the Holy Redeemer Church, Tuen Mun, to support a youth centre and Church constructions in Laos as well as Mercy Hong Kong [*Sunday Examiner*, January 31, March 13].

Father Francqueville said he is grateful to God for having met Lam who bravely fought cancer, doing different acts of charity and bearing witness to God in the last stage of her life. He believes God has already welcomed her into his kingdom.

Father Wotherspoon recalled that he met Lam in the last year of her life. "I was one of many people for whom Camay's faith and courage were a great inspiration," he said.

"We now have a new special friend in heaven who will continue to be with us by her prayers in the presence of Jesus the Good Shepherd," the priest said.

The Footprint of Grace was set up on March 19 last year with the support of Lam's friends. Her hope was that through the Facebook page, she could spread the love of God with postings and the sale of charity products. The items sold were mainly designed by Lam and the total revenue was donated to the needy.

## ENGLISH LESSONS

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Lam in February this year. Photo: Footprint of Grace.

"I hope it can encourage those who are sick or in trouble to remember to follow the footprints of God in good times and in bad times. And to help people live a richer life," she told the *Sunday Examiner* in a 20-minute interview on January, in which she did not feel well and had to pause to cough from time to time. She was often assisted in her replies by Yuki Fung, a co-worker at Footprint of Grace.

**'Many cancer patients are, in fact, tough, talented and interested in helping people. They just need a platform to express themselves'**

Fung recalled that she was not really worried about Fung's physical condition at that time. "If Camay said she was ready for an interview, she was. She normally chose the time of the day when she was most physically fit to do her work," Fung said. She recalled that Lam's motto was not to test God by pushing her body too far, an advice offered by Bishop Ha during a gathering at the Doctor Jesus Centre.

Lam had nearly 60 chemotherapy treatments over the past two years since she was diagnosed with lung cancer, and the side effects caused a lot of physical suffering. She tried targeted

therapy earlier this year which has lesser side effects, but her cancer index began to rise. But she did not give up and tried her best to evangelise and bring more people to God with her last efforts. She was admitted to the intensive care unit on March 17.

In April last year, Lam and Fung arranged and sponsored the setting up of the Doctor Jesus Centre in Jordan Road where Father Wotherspoon has his office. Both then became the backbone of regular prayer meetings at the centre for sick people each Saturday afternoon, a plan initiated by Father Wotherspoon. Many cancer patients received wonderful encouragement from Camay's sharings, some of which are available on Youtube.

Lam had been a successful landscape architect devoted to work before she had cancer, but the disease changed her outlook on life and directed her focus to God.

She gave her testimony through talks at the Doctor Jesus Centre, in posts on the Facebook page of Footprint of Grace, and also on YouTube, encouraging cancer patients and other people.

Fung said the charity work of Footprint of Grace would continue even after Lam's passing. She said some patients at the Doctor Jesus Centre expressed an interest in helping to carry on Lam's mission. "Many cancer patients are, in fact, tough, talented and interested in helping people. They just need a platform to express themselves," she said.

# Use of brownface in television series stokes prejudice

HONG KONG (SE): "Even it is only a character in a TV series, it is still necessary to develop a story based on truth. We do not know why a foreign domestic worker is depicted like that," Johannie Tong Hiu-yun, community relations officer of the Mission for Migrant Workers based at St. John's Cathedral, Garden Road, told the *Sunday Examiner* in an interview.

Tong was commenting on the depiction of a Filipino worker, Louisa, in an April 11 episode of the TVB series, *Barrack O'Karma 1968*, in which the actress resorted to darkening her skin [a practice called, *brownface*]. The incident drew criticism from migrant rights groups who were aggrieved that the insensitivity of the series would reinforce false representations of the foreign domestic workers by depicting them as dark-skinned liars with problems like stealing money or practising voodoo.

"They are wrong stereotypes which may spread incorrect perceptions in Hong Kong society, which do not only cause hurtful feelings among the migrant community, but may also increase conflicts and tensions in their employer's family," Tong said. She believes strengthening these misconceptions will discourage the advancement of harmony in society.

She said the elements of the real life of migrants missing in the TV series are that they mostly suffer from the lack of living space in their employer's home, and the long working hours. In the annual report of Mission for Migrant Workers released in March this year, 98 per cent of the the group's clients worked for 11 hours or more a day. One out of every two said they had to work even on their rest day.

Tong expressed her hope that on International Worker's Day, May 1, more Hong Kong people would become more aware of the contributions of the foreign workers who improve the living standard of many families in Hong Kong, but with low minimum wage and lots of immigration restrictions.

"Household work has long been devalued by Hong Kong society. On Labour Day, we appeal to Hong Kong society to give the foreign domestic workers more dignity," she urged.

The actress involved, Franchesca Wong, apologised in a social media post on April 20 for offending the migrant community.

However, Tong believes that it would not have been difficult to find a Filipino actor to play the role and pointed out that internationally, actors of different nationalities are cast for television and film roles to encourage respect and inclusion, so the failure of TVB to do so could be seen as an act of exclusion.

In a report on April 16 in the *South China Morning Post*, Philippine consul general, Raly Tejada, said that the show was "downright ignorant, insensitive and totally disgusting" and that the Filipino people in Hong Kong were hurt by the negative portrayal of a Filipino worker. He added that the technique of using make-up to darken the skin of a light-skinned actor reinforces negative stereotypes of foreign domestic workers.

A press statement issued by the Asian Migrant Coordinating Body on April 20, expressed offense at the series' callous portrayal of a migrant worker who practised black magic. "It is scandalous and against our religious beliefs."

It said that the series harmed the dignity of migrant workers and could sour the good working relationship in a household, or even worsen the working conditions of migrant workers, even though it is just a fictional television show. It urged TVB to select content that the audience can learn something from instead of fanning stigma and prejudice.



## St. James' Church

### Mass Time

#### Sunday Mass

9:00am

Cantonese

11:00am

English



#### Anticipated

Mass (Sat)

4:30pm

Cantonese

#### Weekday Mass

(Mon - Sat)

7:00am

Cantonese

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