

It was a beautiful and sunny Sunday morning at St. Peter's Square! I thought that concelebrating at the Papal Mass for the Marian Jubilee on the 9th of October was already a privilege, kissing the hand of Pope Francis, and even embracing him was such as blessing!

We were at the end of our two-week stay in Rome for the Retreat of the Board of Trustees of Assumption College. It so happened that the weekend of October 8th and 9th was designated as the Marian Jubilee for the Year of Mercy so we, the Assumptionist group, signed up for the celebration. The group included Fr. Claude, Fr. Peter, Fr. Dinh and myself. Fortunately, we were seated two rows away from the altar during the Mass; that was already a privilege. At the end of the Mass, Pope Francis greeted the concelebrants; and since we were close enough, we were able to hold his hand, talk to him, and I was able to embrace him! That was an unexpected but a grace-filled moment. After that experience I felt so stunned, and my knees were shaking, and all I can was WOW!

Fr. Alex Castro, A.A.