



Parish Office:
6280 6076(phone), secretariat@sfxchurch.sg



St Francis Xavier Kindergarten:
6280 8929, sfx_kindergarten@sfxchurch.sg



Parish Priest:
Rev Fr Benedict Chng
6288 0484, FrBenChng@sfxchurch.sg

Assistant Priest:
Rev Fr Donatien Davaine
6280 8331, FrDon@sfxchurch.sg

Priest in Residence:
Rev Fr Brian D'Souza
6282 3151, FrBrian@sfxchurch.sg

**Disciples
Making Disciples**

**“Ephphatha!” –
Christ’s Entire
Mission**

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
9 September 2018

Is 35:4-7
Jm 2:1-5
Mk 7:31-37

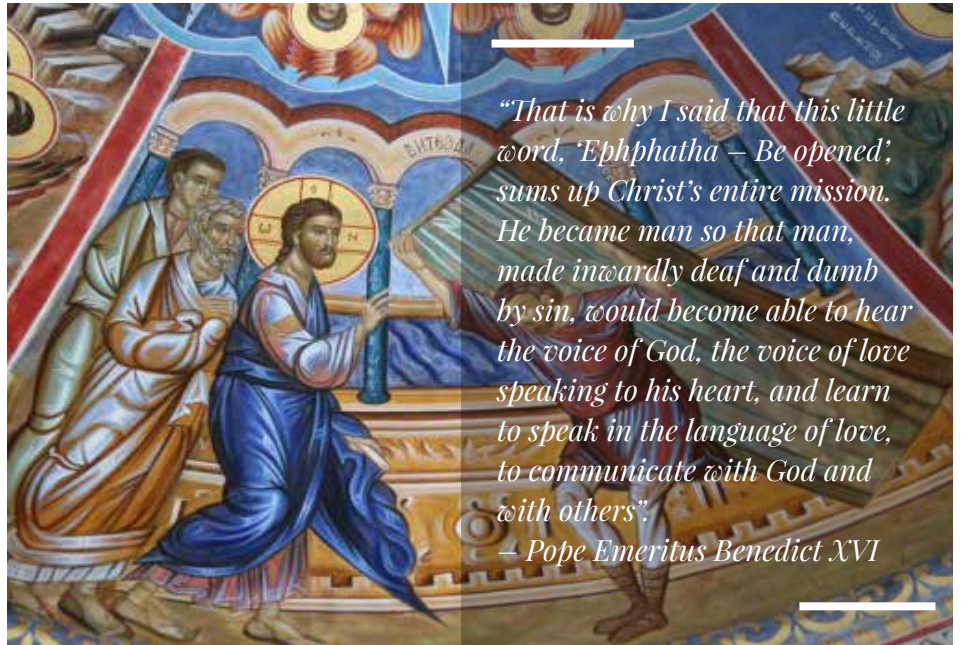
It is a statistical fact that many who suffer from hearing impediments also suffer from speech impediments. Those who work with these physical disabilities explain this, not just as correlation, but as causation: because the hearing-impaired cannot hear their own voice, they cannot modulate their voice, and therefore cannot speak properly. In other words, those who cannot listen cannot speak.

On one level, then, this Sunday’s gospel text is a moral exhortation to open our ears before we open our mouths, to listen before we speak. Jesus thus opens the man’s ears first, and then only does the ligament of the man’s tongue loosen.

Listening precedes speaking.

But on a deeper level, Jesus’ command for the man to “be opened” goes beyond the physical senses. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI points out in a 2012 Angelus address, the man was closed, isolated, before he encountered Jesus. He could not communicate. He could not relate (cf Angelus, 9 Sep. 2012).

This is the consequence of sin—it severs our relation with God, and in doing so, severs our relationship with all other creatures. It closes us



“That is why I said that this little word, ‘Ephphatha – Be opened’, sums up Christ’s entire mission. He became man so that man, made inwardly deaf and dumb by sin, would become able to hear the voice of God, the voice of love speaking to his heart, and learn to speak in the language of love, to communicate with God and with others”.
– Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

to others. The Youth Catechism tells us, “To sin means more than to violate some rules...Sin is ultimately ‘love of oneself even to contempt of God’..Just as sin burdens me with guilt, wounds me, and by its consequences ruins me, so too it poisons and damages the world in which I live” (Youcat 315).

Thus, while Jesus addressed the “Ephphatha” command to the man, Jesus also looked up to heaven. Jesus was petitioning his Father to open up the heavens to heal not just physical, but spiritual disability.

The injunction to be opened, then, is for us to be opened to God. This is why the “Ephphatha” word and gesture is used in the Baptism Rite. The priest touches the mouth and ears of the newly baptised, praying that they may hear the Word of God and profess the faith.

In this regard, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI holds that the word “Ephphatha” sums up Christ’s entire mission: “He

became man so that man, made inwardly deaf and dumb by sin, would become able to hear the voice of God, the voice of love speaking to his heart, and learn to speak in the language of love, to communicate with God and with others”.

Or in the words of 4th century Church Father St Athanasius quoted in CCC460, “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”

When Jesus tells us, “Ephphatha,” he does not just want our physical bodies to be restored. Like CS Lewis writes in *Miracles*, “For God is not merely mending, not simply restoring a *status quo*. Redeemed humanity is to be something more glorious than unfallen humanity would have been, more glorious than any unfallen race now is.”

This is the difference between a mere miracle-worker, not unheard of in ancient times, and Jesus. One merely heals, the other saves.

Announcements

For announcements in the bulletin, send your requests to mmm@sfxchurch.sg by the MONDAY before the weekend, 2359hrs

CANTEEN

The Serangoon North Neighbourhood Group is running the canteen this weekend. Come support your neighbours and see the 'specials' available!

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic session is on **Mon 10th Sept at 8pm, Parish Hall**. Praise and Worship followed by LISS 1st Growth Series, a talk on 'Exercising the Gift of the Holy Spirit (The gift of tongues) session 1 of 2' by Martin Fernandez. All are welcome.

PSLE PRAYERS

Leading up to the PSLE exams, the L6 catechists together with the Parents Prayer Group (PPG) will be organising weekly prayer sessions every Sun from 9 Sep till 30 Sep, 11am to 12.30pm in St Francis Xavier room, 2nd floor, parish centre. These will take place concurrent with the L6s catechism sessions. There will also be a time of worship, prayer and adoration on Fri, 14 Sep in the Parish Hall from 8.15pm to 9.30pm. This will be led by Fr Ben. All parents, godparents and families of the L6 children are welcome and urged to come and spend time in prayer.

As a church, we pray for our younger brothers and sisters in Christ as they strive and study for their exams. We pray for good health, peace of mind and God's guidance during this period. We also pray for the parents, that they will come together and place Christ in the centre of their lives, as we become part of the SFX family, disciples making disciples.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION SUNDAY

The Archdiocese has designated **9 Sep 2018** as Catholic Education Sunday (CES). The aim of CES is to show the importance of School-Church-Home partnerships in delivering a unique Catholic education where Christ is the centre of all we do. The theme is "Catholic Education in Singapore: Nurturing the Whole Child since 1852". Besides a prayer of blessing for Catholic teachers, screening of a 2-min video and distribution of brochures in all parishes, school students will join the congregation in worship at masses.

Students from CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel, St Gabriel's Primary and Secondary will be in their school uniform at the 5.30pm Sat and 11am Sun masses. They will be participating in the following ways - as lectors, as a joint choir singing alongside the church choir, and/or altar servers. Brochures giving information on the schools founded by the seven religious Orders and the diocese will also be distributed after these masses.

CATECHETICAL AWARENESS WEEKEND

The Office For Catechesis (OFC) has designated the weekend of 8/9 Sep as Catechetical Awareness Weekend. Have you ever felt the call to be a catechist? Is there an inner stirring inside you that you have been pushing aside? Have you ever felt that you wanted to help young children and teens get to know more about their faith?

Come and see what being a catechist is all about. Come and find out why we are not called teachers but we are "stewards of the mystery". The info session will be on Sun 16 Sep from 10.30am to 12pm at St Mary/Martha room on the 2nd level in the Parish Centre.

MOVIE NIGHT BY ST JEROME LIBRARY

St Jerome Library will be screening another movie, 'The 13th Day' on **22 Sep (Sat) at 7.15pm in the Parish Hall (2nd level)**. Invite your friends and family along to witness a story of hope and the greatest miracle of the 20th Century. Experience the incredible, emotionally-charged and often harrowing world of three young children who choose to remain loyal to their beliefs, even in the face of death.



Doors will open at 7pm. Light snacks and drinks will be provided. FREE ADMISSION but a love offering will be collected at the end of the movie with all proceeds going towards the SFX Renovation Fund.

Synopsis: <http://www.the13thday.com/fatima-film/fatima-film-synopsis/>

PUBLIC TALK @ AGAPE VILLAGE

A talk on Understanding our Youth: Love and Addiction will be held on Sat **15 Sep from 2 - 4.30pm** in the multi-purpose hall on Level 1, Agape Village, 7A Lor 8 Toa Payoh, Singapore 319264. The event is organised by Caritas Singapore and presented by one of their member organisations, Boys' Town and a close partner, WE CARE Community Services. To register, email agapevillage@caritas-singapore.org or call 6801 7400 (Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm). Registration is free and on a first-come-first served basis.



First Holy Communion



On 2 Sep 2018, our parish celebrated as 55 boys and girls received their First Holy Communion (FHC). Here's the reflection by the participants.

The FHC was a celebration for all - the L3 children, their families, relatives and friends - as the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith: It being the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord.

As the family is the cradle of the spiritual and cultural heritage formation of a child, parents of these children were an integral part of their spiritual preparation. They were actively involved in their First Reconciliation in Oct last year, in meetings held earlier this year that culminated in a retreat with their children held in Aug. At the retreat, parents had opportunities to fellowship with each other and grow a community of faith in support of their children. They also worked with their children on craft activities.

Marjorie Lim, mother of Sophie Lim, said: "The time spent with my daughter doing Catholic craft was meaningful and pleasurable. I also enjoyed getting to know the other parents



Some of the crafts the children made with their parents.

and having good laughs playing games with them. Above all, it made us sit down and reflect on the significance of the FHC, giving Our Lord the importance He deserves."

Irene Lim, mother of Megan Wong, shared that it was the quote from Matthew 19:14 during the spiritual preparation that struck her the most.



Looking for more Information?
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It spoke to her because it reminded her that many times, she takes things in control instead of relying on Jesus. In doing so, she (as would other parents) becomes a hindrance to children being able to reach out to Jesus in their own way.



To help the children say thanks to the Lord for being able to partake in the gift of the Eucharist, the children offered themselves - their unique talents and abilities - through self-portraits which formed a collage that was offered during the Offertory.

Let us continue to keep these children in prayers, that they grow up to be men and women after God's own heart!



Mass Timings

WEEKEND MASSES

Sat Sunset:
5.30pm (Novena at 4.45pm)
Sun: 7am, 9am, 11am & 5.30pm
Confession 15 mins before Sunday Mass

WEEKDAY MASSES

Mon - Fri:
6.30am & 6.30pm
Sat: 6.30am

MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

8.30am *only*

HOLY HOUR

8.30pm, every first Thurs of the month

Opening Hours

PARISH OFFICE

Mon - Fri:
9am - 9pm
Sat: 9am - 7pm
Sun: 8am - 1pm

ADORATION ROOM

Daily: 5.30am - 11pm

LIBRARY

Sun: 8.30am - 12.30pm

COLUMBARIUM

Daily: 7am - 9pm

CANTEEN

Sun: 7am - 12pm

ANOINTING OF THE SICK



The sacrament can be administered to any Catholic awaiting serious surgery, suffers from serious illness or is weakened by old age. Anointing may be before getting admitted for the anticipated medical procedure. Contact the Parish Office to request for a priest. In emergencies, priests of the church nearest to the hospital can be contacted.

INFANT BAPTISM



Baptism of Infants is held every 2nd Sunday of the odd month at 4pm in the main church. Preparation session for both parents and godparents is held the Sunday before at 3.30pm in the SFX room. For more information please contact sfxbaptism@gmail.com.

FUNERAL



Please check with the Parish Office for priest availability and Mass timing before confirming the timing at the crematorium. For prayers at the wake, please contact St. Pio prayer group via the Parish Office.

MARRIAGE



Contact the Parish Office 12 months before your intended date to book the church premises and ensure that your presiding priest is able to make that date.

MASS OFFERING



Mass offering envelopes are available outside the Parish Office. Submit your envelopes at least two weeks in advance of your intended date. Please write the names clearly, and in block letters.

VOLUNTEER & SHARE YOUR GIFTS!

If you're interested in content curation and design layout, contact mmm@sfxchurch.sg