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**Advent: Our
Pre-Christmas Gift**

1st Sunday of Advent
1 Dec 2019

Is 2:1-5
Rom 13:11-14
Mt 24:37-44

All around the country, decorations are up and carols ring out in the malls. Pre-Christmas "Christmas" merrymaking has also started however in the midst of all this merriment, some of us may be feeling a muted sadness. Deep within ourselves, we know that getting together and enjoying each other – no matter how wonderful that may be - is not what Christmas is about. When no one is speaking about Jesus Christ at these gatherings (afterall, it is CHRISTmas!), who or what, are we then celebrating?

As the liturgical colour is changed to purple today, we are reminded that the Church is also entering her own pre-Christmas celebration called Advent. There may be an absence of merrymaking but the Church is not short of reasons for great rejoicing in the Lord!

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin "adventus" which in Greek is "parousia" and has the meaning of "coming". In the ancient world, it was a technical term referring to the arrival of an official - especially that of a king to the provinces. In Advent, the Church, in fact, celebrates **two comings** of Christ our King (Advent Preface). Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI describes our frame of mind in this season as "a dual impulse of the spirit". This is because we are not only



"...we are not only looking ahead to the second coming of Christ, 'the glorious return of the Lord Jesus' but also 'remembering with emotion his birth in Bethlehem.'"

- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

looking ahead to the second coming of Christ, "the glorious return of the Lord Jesus" but also "remembering with emotion his birth in Bethlehem." (Angelus, 27 Nov 2005)

This four-week season of Advent is therefore both a celebration and a gift. It is a celebration because we can be "exultant in his praise" that Christ took on "the lowliness of human flesh" at his first coming 2000 years ago and by his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, "opened for us the way to eternal salvation." (Advent Preface)

Advent is also a gift – a time to uncover new richness in the Christian life. As a penitential season, it invites us to a deeper awareness of our sinfulness, to seek reconciliation with God and experience more powerfully the Holy Spirit's help in battling sin - making us radiant "with righteous deeds" to meet Christ at his second coming (today's Collect). St Paul in today's second reading calls this gift of Christ's Spirit the "armour" of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit empowers us to "live decently...[have] no drunken orgies, no promiscuity or licentiousness...no wrangling or jealousy" – in other words, with the Spirit's help, we can grow in self-mastery or control the desires of the flesh and "live in accordance with the Spirit." (Rom 13:13-14; 8:3)

Perhaps the most famous testimony of being freed from this "madness of

lust" is St Augustine. Having fervently invoked the Holy Spirit's help to excise his "thorns of lust", he also learnt the importance of persistent prayer, "...the greater our desire, the larger will be our capacity to receive the gift, which is very great indeed...The more fervent the desire, the more worthy will be its fruits." (Confessions Book 2, Letter 130)

As we begin this blessed season of Advent, let us more fervently invoke and desire the Holy Spirit in our lives. God's promise to be close to man was already prophesied in the 8th century BC by the prophet Isaiah. At every Mass, we are like the nations streaming to God's Temple to learn his ways and walk in his paths (cf Is 2:2-3). By our attentive listening to the proclamation of the Word, partaking of the Sacraments and conforming our lives to Christ day by day, we are obeying Christ's exhortation to "stay awake" and "stand ready" for his return which will be "at an hour [we] do not expect." (Mt 24:42,44)

The Church is God's new Temple and everyone is welcome to this royal and spiritual family ruled by Christ the King! This is the true joy we must rediscover for ourselves this Advent so that we can share this gift from Christ with all we meet at the "Christmas" celebrations - for merrymaking falls far short of the great rejoicing Jesus intends for all men and women as we await the coming of CHRISTmas.

Announcements

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

GIFT

This weekend, the Catholic Foundation is renewing its annual appeal for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) campaign to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church. This appeal serves as a midpoint update of the progress of the pastoral plan and plans for the next four years including new organisations, initiatives and resource needs. Every Catholic is encouraged to make a regular pledge to support the operational and building needs of the archdiocese. More information can be found in the GIFT booklets that will be distributed during Mass. Please give generously for the vision of the archdiocese. Watch the GIFT Advent video on www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg3liWz387A&t=

SECOND COLLECTION FOR POOR AND NEEDY

SSVP is having the 2nd collection for the poor and needy (Friends-In-Need, FINs) **this weekend**. Kindly and generously donate so that SSVP can continue to aid the FINs directly and indirectly via various programmes with your donations. We thank you for your generosity.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Come and join us to spend an hour of grace in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary on **Mon 9 Dec, 12pm sharp - 1pm** at the **Main Church**. Led by St Pio Ministry. All are welcome.

GIFTED: CHRISTMAS CONCERT BY SFX YOUTH CHOIR

The SFX Youth Choir will be staging their annual concert 'Gifted' on **Sat 21 Dec, 8pm** in the **Main Church!** Tickets at \$20 are on sale this weekend after all masses. There will be no phone bookings but for any queries, please contact Ignatius Ng 9664 2127. All proceeds will go to the SFX Renovation Fund. Grab your tickets today to avoid disappointment.

— TRIDUUM & FEAST DAY 2019 —
THANKSGIVING
BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Celebrant: Fr Benjamin Eishu (Myanmar)

28 NOV (THU) REMEMBERING <i>the Mission</i> P&W 8PM MASS 8.30PM	29 NOV (FRI) SEEKING <i>God's Help</i> P&W 8PM MASS 8.30PM	30 NOV (SAT) SHARING <i>the Mission</i> NOVENA 4.45PM MASS 5.30PM
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PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO EVENING MASSES ON 28 NOV AND 29 NOV.

1 DEC (SUN) FEAST DAY

REBUILD MY CHURCH, RESTORE MY PEOPLE
11AM* FEAST DAY MASS, WITH HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM GOH
**Blessing of Leaders at 11am mass*
• SUNDAY MASS 7AM, 9AM, 5PM*

PLEASE NOTE THAT SUNDAY 5.30PM MASS WILL BE AT 5PM

MOVIE SCREENING OF "UNPROTECTED"

"Unprotected" is a powerful documentary film that reveals the effects of the sexual revolution, and the counter-cultural movement today that is rising from the ashes. #Metoo. Sexting pressure. The Hook-up culture. Teenage depression. How did the culture become so toxic for women? And how did one man (Pope Paul VI) foresee this all so clearly 50 years ago?

Fr Edward Lim, O.C.D will give a short formation talk before the screening of the film on St. Pope Paul VI's document "*Humanae Vitae*". Come and join us to watch this film together as we understand more about the society that we live in today! Let us no longer remain indifferent and ignorant!

Date : Fri 6 Dec
Time: 8pm (formation talk before movie screening)
Venue: SFX Main Church (no snacks are allowed in Church)
Age: Suitable for age 15 and above
Contribution: Love offering

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT RECRUITMENT

We are starting our recruitment drive for children from 3 -12 years of age, teenagers and adults who want to act, sing or help in the Christmas Pageant for the Christmas Eve Family Mass from **4pm** (TBC). The Pageant will be at 5pm followed by the Family Mass at 5.30pm. So if you are interested in being part of Jesus' birthday, please contact Monica (9691 0599), Craig (9451 8256) or Jui (9299 1138). You may also look for our Children's Liturgy booth at the front of the Main Church from **17 Nov - 1 Dec** (3 Sundays after the 9am and 11am Masses) to sign up with us directly.

PRE-CHRISTMAS SALES

Come and see! Come and buy! The Renovation Fundraising team will be selling Gelam Honey, pasta, chocolates and SFX buffs this weekend. Come, open your bags and wallets, pick up something and do your part for our church rebuilding fund. Oh and let's try to save our earth, bring your own carrier bags!

ADVENT PRAYER TREES

What better gift for Christmas than the gift of prayer? Let the Holy Spirit guide you in praying intentionally for someone this Advent - either to return to the Sacraments, or to be open to knowing our Lord and receiving the Greatest Gift of JESUS this season! Write their name(s) on a tag and hang it on the prayer trees near the sanctuary in Church. As a faith community, we will pray for all these intentions throughout Advent.



HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS THIS MONTH

UNIVERSAL - THE VERY YOUNG

That every country resolutely commits to taking the necessary measures to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.

IN THE MONTH OF NOV 2019

CONDOLENCES

We offer our prayers to the families of the following who have returned to the Lord:

1. Patricia Ng Yan Hua
2. Margarito Jobli Hernandez

BAPTISMS

We welcome:

1. Eu Wen Ting Eleanor
2. Toa Yi Xin Emma Victoria
3. Kwek Jia Xin Genevieve

4. Kwek Jia Yi Glenda
5. Kwek Hong Ze Shane
6. Andrea Ellie Hui Xing Ting
7. Logan Ranjan
8. Dhilan Ranjan
9. Aanya Ranjan
10. De Oliveira Sharlene Faith
11. Karl Alexander Goh
12. Grace Teoh Jia En
13. Gwenda Teoh Jia Lee
14. Caroline Hannah Lee Chin Fung

Mass for the Elderly & Sick with Anointing



Many hands came to help organise the Mass for The Sick on Sun 24 Nov. Young and old came together to help usher, register, push wheelchairs and made this Mass a truly special one for those present, mainly our elderly, infirmed and sick parishioners. After the event was over, some thoughts that were expressed on this.

"Thanks, Long, for the opportunity to serve. It was very humbling to see how difficult it was to load and unload the old folks from the bus. Yet, the elderly themselves were determined to come to SFX for the anointing. Such a great display of faith in believing in God's divinity and love."



"It is touching to witness the sick seeking solace and consolation in our Lord. And that this mass was helped by teams of 'multi-generational' parishioners, including the CM/NCC/Elders Group ministries who were our arms and legs in reaching to past attendees, truly reflected the church being the body of Christ."



"It was so apt that Mass for the Sick fell on the feast of Christ the King. This helped to remind us of the 'pilgrim' nature of our life here on earth; that our many blessings bestowed upon us by our Lord and King (such as mobility) can often be taken for granted. And our loved ones too who we may also take for granted."

"We need to let the Lord reign in our hearts and like what Fr Ben reminded us in his homily, to reflect often (on a daily basis) on our daily encounter with the Lord in the people we meet and events of the day."



The Advent season

Advent is here and what can we do to prepare ourselves? Parents with young children sometimes start on a little advent calendar project where the little ones can do things each day and maybe get 'rewarded' for every good deed done, with a small treat or a sticker. With the help of FaithSteps*, we present the adult Advent calendar. Do your part to prepare your heart and remember always - Jesus is the Reason for the Season! Have a joyful Advent.

ADVENT 2019

1-Dec
Heavenly father, we thank you for the gift of HOPE for eternal life where we can live with You forever.
1st Sunday of Advent

3-Dec
Heavenly father, we pray for PEACE in our families, in our communities, and especially in our world.
3rd Sunday of Advent

5-Dec
Bless someone in need by gifting them with some money or necessities

6-Dec
Attend a weekday mass

7-Dec
Read & reflect: Matt 24: 37-44

8-Dec
Pray to be able to open your heart and to forgive those who may have hurt you

9-Dec
Say a prayer for your parish church; the priests and those who serve in church

10-Dec
Read & reflect: Matt 2: 1-15

11-Dec
Go to confession and ask God for forgiveness for your sins

12-Dec
Set up a Nativity scene at home

13-Dec
Spend time in Eucharistic Adoration

14-Dec
Read & reflect: Matt 3: 2-11

15-Dec
Heavenly father, we pray for a JOYful spirit, as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Your Son at Christmas.
5th Sunday of Advent

16-Dec
Read & reflect: Luke 1: 1-66

17-Dec
Find out if there are any parish projects that you can help out with

18-Dec
Pray for forgiveness from those whom you may have hurt

19-Dec
Spend some time in silence listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit

20-Dec
Read & reflect: Matt 1: 18-24

21-Dec
Pray the rosary, turning to Mary as a guide for meditating on the mysteries of the life of Christ

22-Dec
Heavenly father, we thank you for your great LOVE and for giving us the most precious gift of Your Son.
4th Sunday of Advent

23-Dec
Happy Birthday Jesus!

24-Dec
Make an Advent resolution - plan to do something special this season to prepare your hearts for Jesus

25-Dec
Jesus is the Reason for the Season

FaithSteps
www.faith-steps.com @hellofaithsteps

*FaithSteps is a team of Catholic moms who look for ways to make our faith more interactive and relatable for our young children. Do check out the link to their blog at <https://hellofaithsteps.wordpress.com>



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg

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 except PH

Opening Hours

PARISH OFFICE

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

ADORATION ROOM

Temporarily closed

LIBRARY

Temporarily closed

COLUMBARIUM

Temporarily closed

CANTEEN

Temporarily closed

ANOINTING OF THE SICK



The sacrament can be administered to any Catholic awaiting serious surgery, suffering from serious illness or weakened by old age. Anointing may be given before admission 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 check with the Parish Office.

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 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. Church unavailable from 1 Nov 2018 due to renovations.

MASS OFFERING



Mass offering envelopes are available outside the Parish Office and Church. 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