



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Our “Cloak of Integrity of God”

2nd Sunday of Advent
9 Dec 2018

Bar 5:1-9
Ph 1:4-6,8-1
Lk 3:1-6

The call to repentance by John the Baptist in today's gospel has echoed through time to us as penitential services begin across parishes this week. As we take courage and inspiration from the many who sought out John at the Jordan in order to receive God's forgiveness, we should also encourage our fellow brothers and sisters to seek the peace and renewal Jesus is offering us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To those outside the faith, Confession can appear to be a ritual of sadistic shaming. This is far from the truth! The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, as it is properly called, is in fact one of the two Sacraments of Healing.

By these Sacraments, “...Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies...has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members” (CCC1424).

Healing our guilt and wounds from sin is the purpose of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we sin and even when we are in denial of our sins, our hearts are heavy and hardened. When we open ourselves to God and place our sinfulness and guilt before him, God's gift of healing and renewal is already at work in us because

“conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him” (CCC1432).

This renewed awareness that God is helping us even in our examination of conscience to see what areas of our lives are in need of “straightening”, “filling-in”, “being laid low” and “smoothened” is a great cause for joy (cf. Lk 1:4-5, Is 40:3-4). For despite knowing our sins, God is not judging us but offering us his mercy and help to be converted and prepare well for Judgement Day.

It is with this awareness that God is merciful and desires his people to repent and return to him that the prophet Baruch proclaimed to the Jews in exile in Babylon, “Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress”. Instead of being weighed down by remorse, they were told to see themselves in a new light as God brings the exile to an end and effect their return to Jerusalem: “put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever, wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head” (Bar 5:1-2).

The imagery used here recalls the white garment and candle we receive at baptism, “The *white garment* symbolizes that the person baptized has ‘put on Christ’, has risen with Christ. The *candle*, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are ‘the light of the world’.

The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God...” (CCC1243).

Using Baruch's imagery, our baptismal white garment symbolizes ‘the Cloak of Integrity of God’ – Christ himself – the perfect man who is pure, blameless, Truth and honourable. By the candle, we now have “the diadem of the glory of the Eternal” – the “mind of Christ” to desire and obey the Father's will (Phil. 2:5). We now have the capacity to love God and love others as Christ loves. We can grow in spiritual insights – improving our knowledge of God and his will, deepening our perception so that we can always recognise what is best (cf. Phil 1:9-10).

Just as Baruch told the exiles that God's gift of restoration is so that their splendour can be shown to every nation under heaven, so too, by living out our baptism as people of peace, integrity and wisdom, we attract others to desire to know Christ, thus spreading the Good News as St Paul praised the Philippians for doing (cf. Bar 5:3; Phil 1:5).

May we participate sincerely in the penitential service this week so as to encounter once again God's mercy and grace. With Christ's peace and joy imparted in our hearts, may we persevere in being “pure and blameless” and ready for the Day of Christ! (cf Phil 1:10)

“...put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever, wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head”
– Bar 5:1-2

Announcements

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

CANTEEN

Legion of Mary will be running the canteen this weekend. They will also be selling fresh flowers and potted plants at the Church foyer. All proceeds will go directly to the SFX Renovation Fund.

TOTAL COLLECTED FROM SECOND COLLECTION

With your donations last weekend during 2nd collection, SSVP were able to raise **SGD\$13,799.85**. We thank you for your generosity and continued support of our activities.

GIFT COLLECTION

Next weekend, **15/16 Dec**, being the 3rd weekend of the month, there will be a second collection to receive your monthly pledges and contributions for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) campaign. More info is available at gift.catholicfoundation.sg.

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.

ONE: LOVE IN THE CITY

Why do we do what we do during Christmas? In a light-hearted talk show, come and discover the reasons for the ways we celebrate Christmas. This will be on **29 Dec** from **2-4pm** at The Catholic Centre (55 Waterloo St, S187954). Invite your non-Catholic friends and family members to help them understand and experience Christmas! For more info and to register: www.one.org.sg/events

PENITENTIAL SERVICES IN SERANGOON DISTRICT

All services are held at 8pm.

12 Dec (Wed) - Church of St Francis Xavier

13 Dec (Thu) - Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

14 Dec (Fri) - Church of St. Vincent de Paul

17 Dec (Mon) - Church of the Transfiguration

18 Dec (Tue) - St Anne's Church

19 Dec (Wed) - Church of The Immaculate Heart of Mary



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMINGS

24 Dec, Monday

5.15pm Carolling, 5.30pm Mass

8.30pm Pageant, 9pm Mass

11.30pm Carolling, 12mn Mass

25 Dec, Tuesday

9am, 11am, 5.30pm

GIFT BEARERS' BAKE SALE

The Gift Bearers and their families have come together to contribute their skills in baking and cooking a range of delightful goodies. On **Sun 9 Dec**, come to the foyer and partake in an array of fresh homemade shepherd's pie, quiche, scones and even a unique breakfast set of Nespresso coffee and a cookie - perfect for a lovely breakfast, or an afternoon tea! All proceeds will go to the SFX Renovation Fund.

A DELIGHTFUL LITTLE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Christmas is a time of joy, rejoicing and celebration for God has given us Jesus, the most precious gift of all. So come celebrate Christmas as a family of Christ at our deLIGHTful little CHRISTmas party. Held on **Fri 28 Dec, 7.30pm - 9.30pm**. It will be an evening of food, bingo, carolling, performances and fellowship!

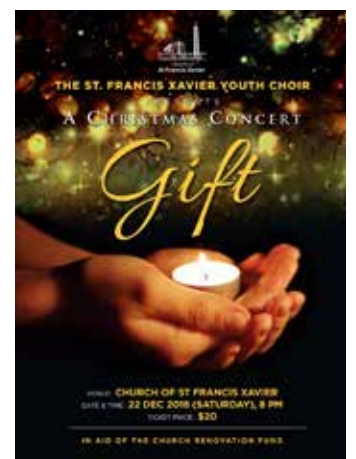
*Do note that on the day of the party, there will be some restrictions for traffic movements within the compound. **The carpark will be closed from 6.30pm - 9.30pm**, so if you are planning to leave after evening mass, we will recommend for you to find alternative parking.*



GIFT: CHRISTMAS CONCERT BY SFX YOUTH CHOIR

Have you gotten your tickets to the Christmas concert by our very own SFX Youth Choir yet? The concert will be held on **Sat 22 Dec, 8pm** at SFX, so bring along your family and friends! **Priced at \$20 each**, our Youth choir will leave you captivated as they join their voices and give a spin on specially arranged pieces of our all-time favourite hymns and carols.

Limited tickets are available so hurry and get yours today! For ticketing enquiries, please contact Thud Chee at 9632 3489 or Melissa at 9363 6516. All proceeds will go to the SFX Renovation Fund.



Advent of Peace: The Gift We Must Receive

As we light the second candle of Advent, which is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle, we are reminded of the place where preparations were made for the birth of the Christ child. But just how are we preparing for his birth? Are we rushing around with the crowds trying to get the tree up, the decorations arranged, the lights sorted, the turkey ordered, the gifts sourced and bought and wrapped.....and the list goes on. Or are we taking the time to truly prepare our hearts to receive him? This week, we hear John the Baptist's call to conversion, an invitation to open our hearts to welcome the Son of God.



Our theme for this Advent week is *Peace*

During this season, we often hear this phrase "Peace on earth." We hope and pray for this peace for ourselves and all humankind. But what really is this peace that we long for? Is it more than the absence of strife or the hope that all will be well?

Peace is a gift that we must be prepared for. As John's message prepared the way for Jesus, we too are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming. We can respond to John's message by repentance and reform of our lives. And with penitential services happening in the Serangoon district from **12 Dec** onwards, what better way to prepare than to make a good confession.

God wants us to experience his peace and the Prince of Peace is our ultimate source of peace. We have to receive it. As John says in 14:27,

"I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

The peace that we so desperately want and search for in our lives and our world is Christ. But we must choose to *receive HIM*, to *follow HIM* and to *trust HIM*. This Christmas, let us step out of the busyness for a bit and reflect on this gift we have been given.

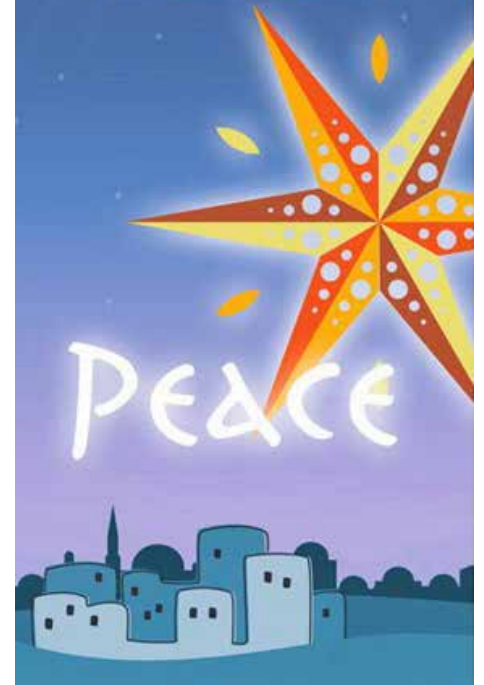


This week, take the time to reflect on the following:

- What is *shalom* to you?
- Biblical peace starts with trust in God, meditate on Matthew 6:25-34.
- How can you turn away from sinful selfishness and turn towards God?
- Is there a relationship with a friend or a family member that you need to repair or someone to reconcile with? Pray before you do.
- How about fasting before the feasting?
- Go for confession and make right your relationship with God.

Light to guide
our feet into a
way of peace.

Luke 1:79



PRAYER

Lord,

thank you for the gift that the world cannot give. Sometimes, I forget that you are always there.....waiting for me to return. Give me the courage to recognise the ways I have turned against you and to soften my heart to receive your love. As I prepare for the birth of your son, help me to focus on you and your promises, on what I have received and the joy and peace that awaits me in your heavenly kingdom.

Amen.



Triduum & Feast Day Celebrations



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg



On our Feast Day of St Francis Xavier, Archbishop William Goh spoke with great conviction and passion for the importance of having missionary zeal for the Kingdom of God. He made reference to the life of our Patron Saint, *St Francis Xavier*, sharing with us the effect of his missionary zeal. He baptized over 30,000 people in a short span of 10 years and converted them without even knowing the language of the people. As such, he is the Patron Saint for all mission countries, with Singapore being one of these mission countries.

If we are truly grateful for The Good News that has been brought to us by *St Francis Xavier* and the many missionaries that came to Singapore, then we are to be responsible and obligated to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News, to all creation, as instructed in The Gospel. However, there seems to be a lack of zeal for this mission. Thus, in order to be renewed in this area, we need to be aware what are the causes that lead to the failure of this sense of mission.



Archbishop Goh listed 4 causes:

1. The lack of a personal encounter with our Lord
2. The lack of ongoing Discipleship Formation
3. The lack of mentors and witnesses, and
4. The failure to connect to the Family i.e a community to sustain and grow our faith.

The challenge was given to us; to look into these four areas and to actively do something so that we can grow as Missionary Disciples making other Disciples.



During the triduum, Father Romeo exhorted us to **Recall**, **Reflect** and to **Recharge** on our Mission. He also shared the 7, 8, 9 principle, challenged us with his "assignments" and reminded us on what we had to do this Advent season.

Do check out the SFX Facebook page for more pictures and summaries of his homilies.

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: Reopen in Dec 2019

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 infbaptism@sfxchurch.sg.

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. Church unavailable from 1 Nov 2018 due to renovations.

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