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*Making Disciples*

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**“Lord I Believe”**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
22 Mar 2020

1 Sam 16:1, 6-7, 10-13A  
Eph 5:8-14  
Jn 9:1-41



**“The Son of God  
became Man, so that  
we might become God”**  
– *Saint Athanasius*

Unlike many of Jesus' miraculous healings, be it the healing of blind Bartimaeus, the ten lepers or the paralytic (cf Mk 10, Lk 17, Mt 9) where Jesus effected the healing by simply speaking, in today's Gospel, Jesus healed the blind man by spitting on the ground, making clay with his saliva and smearing it on the blind man's eyes. According to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, this detailed description recalls how God lovingly created man, "This act alludes to the creation of man, which the Bible recounts using the symbol of dust from the ground, fashioned and enlivened by God's breath... By healing the blind man Jesus worked a new creation." (Angelus, 2 Mar 2008) Jesus not only restored the man's sight but also revealed his divinity. As CCC 548 tells us, "The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him."

In a few days on 25th March, Holy Mother Church will be celebrating the Solemnity of the Annunciation, where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, announcing the great news that she would bear a son and name him Jesus, which means "God Saves" in Hebrew (CCC 430). By his incarnation, Jesus became man like us in all things except sin (*Gaudium et Spes* 24). As our High Priest, he has "...similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). The purpose of God becoming man is for our deification or for us to partake

in God's nature. St Athanasius reminds us of this great privilege we have received in our baptism by saying, "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." (CCC 460)

Our understanding of how Jesus can be fully human and fully divine came by way of many Spirit-guided Church Councils. The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD) concluded that Jesus is "consubstantial" with the Father as we now profess in the Creed. The Council of Ephesus (431 AD) introduced the term "hypostatic union" to describe how Christ's divine and human natures come together in the one divine person of Jesus Christ, thereby rightly making Mary the Mother of God or *theotokos* (CCC 466).

These Councils and today's miraculous healing also show us that we can all grow in knowing with greater clarity what God has revealed of himself. The gift of the Holy Spirit has made all of us God's "children of light" capable of better knowing, loving and serving God (Eph 5:8).

This is a faith journey we must be committed to as our Holy Father reminds us, "The blind man's journey...is a journey in stages that begins with the knowledge of Jesus' name. He does not know anything else about him; in fact, he says: 'The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes'... he first

considers him a prophet and then a man who is close to God. Once he has been banished from the temple...Jesus finds him again and 'opens his eyes' for the second time, by revealing his own identity to him: 'I am the Messiah,'...At this point the man who had been blind exclaims: 'Lord, I believe!', and he prostrates himself before Jesus. This is a passage of the Gospel that makes evident the drama of the inner blindness of so many people, also our own for sometimes we have moments of inner blindness." (Angelus, 30 Mar 2014)

Today, we find ourselves before the distressing drama of the COVID-19 pandemic with some blaming God for inaction. How can we be God's "children of light" and bring hope and healing to them? Our Holy Father has called all of us to pray "for the sick, for health workers and for the many people suffering from this epidemic." (10 March 2020) He himself made a walking pilgrimage to the Basilica of St Mary Major and the Church of San Marcello al Corso to pray before a miraculous crucifix that was carried in procession through Rome during the plague of 1522. Let us join him in sacrifice and earnest prayer for God's illumination and that many will believe in Jesus' merciful love by our prayers and fraternal attention (cf CCC 1516).

## Announcements

For announcements in the bulletin, send your requests to [mmm@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg) by the MONDAY before the weekend, 2359hrs

### CLOSURE OF GROTTO

As part of our renovation project, Mother Mary's statue will be cleaned and restored with a new coat of paint before we move her to our new Grotto. To minimise the movement of the statue, cleaning and restoration will be conducted at its current location and we will be closing the Grotto from **Mon 30 Mar**. Come and pray the rosary before then and share with us your testimonies from her intercession. Capture these final moments as we bid our Grotto farewell until we see our Lady anew at the new location.

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on **27/28 Mar** and **3/4 Apr** with our priests on **Fri 5pm – 7pm** and **Sat 9am – 12pm**. You may contact the Parish Office to make an appointment.

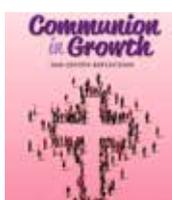
### ONLINE CHILDREN'S MASS

Calling all parents with young children! There is a pre-recorded Children's Mass online every **Sun** from 8am onwards! Watch it at [www.youtube.com/catholicsg](http://www.youtube.com/catholicsg).



### ONE: LENT REFLECTION BOOKLET 2020

The Office for the New Evangelisation has produced a booklet of reflections for the season of Lent. The theme is **"Communion in Growth"**. The booklet is available outside the Parish Office and is also available online at [tinyurl.com/oneLent2020](http://tinyurl.com/one Lent 2020).



### SFX MASS COLLECTIONS (CASH/CHEQUE/PAYNOW)

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." - 2 Corinthians 9:11

With the suspension of Masses over the last few weeks, income collection has greatly decreased. On top of utilities, staff salaries and other expenses, our Church has to also finance the current renovation project. As such, we would like to appeal to parishioners for your continued support. Mass collections can be made via:

- **Cash or Cheque** (made payable to **Church of St. Francis Xavier**). Please put it into the envelopes labelled **Mass Collection** which can be found next to the mass offering box outside the Parish Office. You may either hand the filled envelope to the Parish Office, drop it off in the mass offering box, or mail them to **63A Chartwell Drive S(558758)**.
- **PayNow!**
  1. Launch the **PayNow** Service in your bank's app OR online banking website
  2. Select **"Send via Unique Entity Number (UEN)"**
  3. Key in Parish UEN - **T08CC4033J**
  4. Check Name - **Church of St Francis Xavier**
  5. Key in Amount - \$XXX
  6. Key in Ref – **Mass Collection**

Thank you for your kind generosity!

### SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

- **Online streaming of Masses** by our Archdiocese: visit [www.catholic.sg/visit-mass/livestream](http://www.catholic.sg/visit-mass/livestream) or find the Masses and homilies of our Archbishop on the channel maintained by our Archdiocese at [www.catholic.sg/mass](http://www.catholic.sg/mass).
- **Novena devotions and homilies:** They can be found on the YouTube channel of The Church of St. Alphonsus (Novena Church), [www.youtube.com/channel/UC0vK7wL3ZFCqKiQxhajn3wA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0vK7wL3ZFCqKiQxhajn3wA).
- **Station of the Cross:** conducted at the Cathedral via [www.youtube.com/cathedralofthegoodshepherdsg](http://www.youtube.com/cathedralofthegoodshepherdsg)

### *Prayer for Protection Against Coronavirus*

Praise You, Heavenly Father, Almighty Creator of the Universe. You appointed us stewards of all fauna and flora and gave us mastery over them. In so many ways, we have failed you and we ask for your forgiveness.

In these worrisome times, with the global Coronavirus pandemic threatening our health and existence, we humbly and confidently ask for Your protection, healing and restoration, especially of those who are already afflicted with it.

Father, keep safe all medical staff, all who comfort the sick, all border patrol personnel, and all who courageously take up the task of keeping our country and the world safe from this virus.

If it is Your will, bind this plague and take this suffering away from us. Holy Spirit, transform our fears into strength, resilience, steadfastness and fortitude, and help us bear fruits of faith, hope, charity and prudence.

Precious Blood of Jesus, purify the world of this pestilence. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. Mother of Perpetual Succour, watch over us and intercede for us. St. Benedict and St. Raphael, pray for us. All our guardian angels, light and guard our way.

In Jesus' Most Holy name we pray. Amen.

# *School of Witness 2020: Drink Deeply, Live Fully*

*The School of Witness (SOW) is an eight-week live-in discipleship school that aims to grow participants in the awareness of who God is, and who they are. Organised annually by the Office for Young People (OYP) for youths and young working adults, six of our parishioners had the opportunity to attend it this year, and they will be sharing with us their testimonies in the weeks to come, so stay tuned to it!*



## *"God is with Me"* - Clara Tee, 25

Since I was a child I grew up with lots of affirmation. It. Was. Great! But to ensure I was liked by others, I started to change my identity to fit a certain mould. I would take a mental note of admirable qualities I saw in people or in the media and try to imitate them. Whenever I saw someone mess up, I would vow not to be like them. This process of constantly changing myself slowly made me forget who I really was. I let others define me, talk on my behalf and tell me what to do, trusting that they knew better, although all this left me feeling empty and used.

I was scared of trying new things and had developed a fear of failure. Being in this constant state of confusion – wondering whether what I was doing was right or wrong, whether I was good enough – turned into self-hatred. I saw myself as good for nothing. I was so frustrated by who I became, and along the way I just got tired of thinking and trying. When I came into the School of Witness, I had already given up on myself, that I was just a failure and that nothing's going to change.

Before SOW I thought I knew who God was. However, when we had a session on God the Father, I realised just how distant

and ungrateful I was. I was like a spoilt brat who only sought my father when I needed something, but never bothered to spend time with him to get to know him. I would ask Him for help but before He answers, I would do my own thing. I didn't trust that He could fix my issues and was too impatient to wait on Him to change my life.

However, during one prayer ministry at SOW, the prayer team shared with me a story of a little girl who had worked hard to buy a plastic pearl necklace and wouldn't give it to the Father when he asked for it. Eventually she gave it to him as she loved him more than the necklace. In return, the father gave her a real pearl necklace. It was then that I realised that God was there with me in my isolation, and he knew how tired I was of trying. He promised that if I could just release all I had done to him, he would give me something better. Taking His word for it, I opened my hands during worship and said, "Take it, take it all. Take all my fears, doubts, self-hatred and need for control. Take everything and show me who you want me to be." After releasing these things to him, I felt a weight lift off my shoulders.

Since then my relationship with God has changed. Instead of only going to God when I need something, I now feel excited to spend time with God, reading scripture



to see what He wants to tell me. Each conversation with Him reminds me of his faithfulness, patience and love for me. No longer do I turn to others for affirmation, instead I turn to God who knows me. He gives me strength to get out of my pity parties and rebuke lies that tell me that I am not lovable or I am not good enough. I now walk with dignity recognising that I am a child of God, who is wonderfully made, loved and perfect in the eyes of her Father. With the assurance that my worth does not diminish if I fail, I find it easier to trust myself again.

Truly I have found what I had been looking for in God. I am blessed to be loved by such a compassionate and fun-loving father, and I hope you too will be open to experiencing Him. So brothers and sisters in Christ, for those of you who are self-reliant and struggling, I challenge you to release that need for control to God and slowly be amazed by the freedom and joy that comes with it.

# Nurturing our faith this Lent



Every year during Lent, it would be around this time that we would be asking ourselves just what sort of Lent it has been. How has our efforts been towards trying to pray more, give more and fast from what is keeping us away from our Lord? This Lent, however, so much has been happening in the world that its not surprising if many of us have been gripped with fear and uncertainty about the general state of life than to worry about the state of our spiritual life. But it is precisely BECAUSE of what is happening that all the more, we should not give up what we have been trying to do for Lent but hanker down and try even harder.

## Prayer

Without daily and weekend masses to attend, have we been making use of the resources that have been set up for us? Daily Online streaming of masses conducted by the Archdiocese can be found on the channel maintained by the Archdiocese. Novena devotions and homilies can also be found on the Youtube channel of The Church of St Alphonsus (Novena Church). However, all these resources should be used to HELP one pray and not detract from praying. Perhaps in these times of worry and uncertainty, one can find solace and comfort in slowing down and meditating on the words that our Lord has given us in the bible. Pick a verse from the gospel of the day and sit with it. Let it speak to you as you ask our Lord to speak and then LISTEN. Quietly. Attentively.

## Fasting

Whatever Lenten practice of fasting that one has adopted, the questions that are important to ask are: Is this REALLY a sacrifice for me? What distracts me most from what is really important? How can I address it? How can it help me to better love others?

## Almsgiving

As our parishes and other Catholic organisations depend on regular Sunday collections (which are now almost non-existent) can we and should we give more now? With regular expenses to maintain, SFX has the added expense of renovations to finance. There are many easy and convenient ways to give, either electronically or otherwise. If it is too difficult to give every week, perhaps using the GIRO option may be an option? And whatever one gives,

“God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (2 Cor: 9-8)

So as we strive to struggle through these uncertain times, perhaps we can look at what is happening in a different way?

**L.O.C.K.D.O.W.N.** is a time to:

- L** - listen to God's voice and reflect. Let go and let God.
- O** - obey his word and his teachings.
- C** - call on Jesus' name and be calm.
- K** - know what is the purpose of all of this.
- D** - dwell in his presence. Do not panic.
- O** - offer a prayer for everyone's safety.
- W** - wait and be patient, this too shall pass.
- N** - nurture our personal relationship with him.



Looking for more Information?  
visit [www.sfxchurch.sg](http://www.sfxchurch.sg)

## Mass Timings

### WEEKEND MASSES

Suspended until further notice

### WEEKDAY MASSES

Suspended until further notice

### MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Suspended until further notice

### HOLY HOUR

Suspended until further notice

## Opening Hours

### PARISH OFFICE

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

### ADORATION ROOM

Temporarily closed

### LIBRARY

Temporarily closed

### COLUMBARIUM

7am - 7pm

### 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](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg)