



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Disciplined Choices

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time
25 Aug 2019

Is 66:18-21
Hebr 12:5-7, 11-13
Lk 13:22-30

Taken together, the readings this Sunday seem paradoxical. On the one hand, Isaiah tells us that God will come "to gather the nations of every language" and "they shall come to witness my glory." (Is 66:18) In other words, everyone, without exception, will be gathered and they will see the glory of God. Yet, in the gospel reading, Jesus himself tells us that we "must do our best to enter by the narrow door" and that "many will try to enter and will not succeed." (Lk 13:22) Is God being insincere in his invitation? Is he teasing us - calling and gathering all of us, knowing that not many will be allowed into his kingdom?

The key to making sense of this apparent paradox is love. God is love (cf 1 Jn 4:8). Out of love, God created Man so that he can share this love. But love is not true love unless it is freely given. Therefore, out of this divine love, God also gave man free-will. Man has the free will to make choices in all things and most importantly, to choose to love or choose not to love. It is by his own free-will choices that Man alone decides if he accepts the universal call of God into his heavenly kingdom which alone can satisfy the deepest longings and hunger in man's heart. God calls everyone but he also says "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil" (Deut 30:15). We are all free to choose between the two.

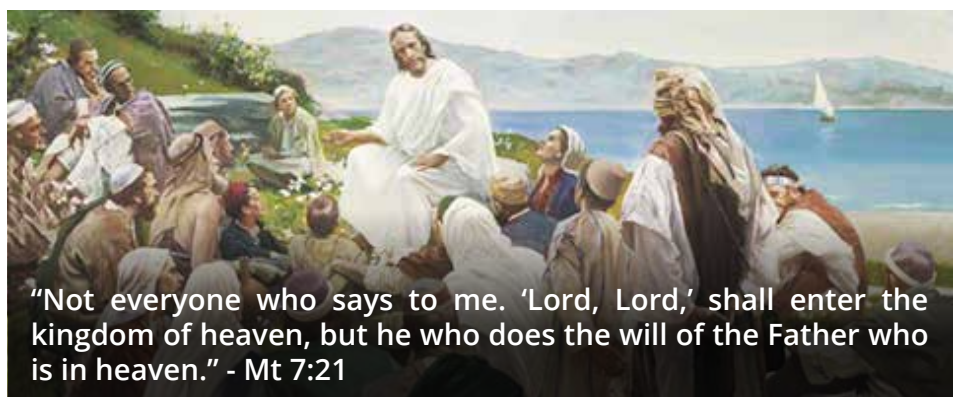
In the gospel today, Jesus calls us to choose the "narrow door" because it leads to life (cf Mt 7:13-14). But what exactly is this "narrow door" and where do we find it? This narrow door is found when we do the will of God the Father in heaven (Mt 7:21) which is contained in the "new commandment" that Jesus has given us: "that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34, 15:12). Loving one another the way that Jesus has loved us, is a "narrow door" because that sort of love calls for self-sacrifice. Just as a husband or wife will deny themselves in order to give of themselves to each other; just as parents will deny their own comfort and enjoyment so that their children can have the best of everything, so loving one another the way Jesus loves, is a "narrow door" because it will hurt and entail some level of personal sacrifice and suffering.

The second reading describes this suffering as a sort of discipline and training. It trains our hearts to love unconditionally even when we are "persecuted"; it trains us to be "poor in spirit" and put our faith in God; it disciplines us to "hunger for righteousness" and choose to always do what is morally right. In short, it will help

us to live out the Beatitudes and lead us to holiness and God. In fact, if we choose to welcome this discipline and training and endure its pain, we will discover in time that it "bears fruit in peace and goodness" (Hebr 12:11). So the second reading tells us to persevere, because it is out of love that God disciplines and trains us for his kingdom.

Finally, Jesus also warns us that this "narrow door" will not remain open forever. He tells us that once it is shut it will not be re-opened (cf Lk 13:25). Once that "narrow door" shuts and we find ourselves on the "outside", we will be excluded from the Kingdom. The narrow door shuts when we breathe our last on this earth. As the Catechism says, "Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ" (CCC 1021). In other words, we need to use our free-will wisely while we are still alive and make choices that set us on the path for God's kingdom.

So let us choose to do good, choose to love one another the way Jesus has loved us. Then when our time to leave this earth comes, we can have strong hope that there will be a place for us at the feast in the Kingdom of God.



"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of the Father who is in heaven." - Mt 7:21

Announcements

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

COLUMBARIUM

Please note that the columbarium will be closed till completion of phase one of the renovation project (estimated **mid-Nov**). This is for the safety of the public. Thank you for your understanding.

SPIRITUAL BOUQUETS FOR SFX CER

Offer a Spiritual Bouquet (prayers or devotional acts) for all involved in our upcoming SFX CER. We will be offering rosary prayers and devotional acts of fasting as our Spiritual Bouquet. Booths will be set up during all weekend masses from **7 - 29 Sep**. Come and sign up for an excellent opportunity to live up to our charitable self!

PARISH FORMATION PROGRAMME 2019: AUTHENTIC LISTENING

Everyone has an innate desire to be known and heard. Active listening helps us build relationships, come out of ourselves and build community in our homes, workplace and parish. So come and listen to Lance, a spiritual director at Kingsmead Spirituality Centre, on his teaching of the art of authentic listening on **Mon 2 Sep and 9 Sep, 8 - 10pm** at the **Main Church**. All are welcome!

SFX CONVERSION EXPERIENCE RETREAT

SFX will be having our own stay-in conversion experience retreat (CER) from **Wed 6 Nov - Sun 10 Nov**, conducted by Archbishop William Goh at the Catholic Spirituality Centre (CSC)! Successful registration for CER will be determined by balloting. **Important ballot guidelines and the application form are now available at the Parish Office and Main Church. You can also download them via www.sfxchurch.sg/forms-and-admin.**

SFX CER Balloting Day:

Date: Sat 31 Aug

Time: 9am - 1pm

(Registration **starts at 9 am** and **closes at 10am** for balloting)

Venue: St Peter's Hall, Level 1

Address: Catholic Spirituality Centre (1261 Upper Serangoon Rd S534796)

60TH ANNIVERSARY PARISH FEAST DAY DINNER: TICKET SALES!

Celebrate our 60th Feast Day as a parish community on **Sun 1 Dec, 7pm** at **Ban Heng Restaurant** (Harbourfront Centre #04-01, 1 Maritime Square S099253). Besides the sumptuous menu and entertainment, expect exciting games and a lucky draw! Look out for the ticket sales booth after mass and purchase your tickets early. Tickets cost **\$70 per person**, first come first served basis. **Renovation fundraiser tables available at \$10,000 per table. For further details or to purchase a table, contact the parish priest.**

ARCHDIOCESAN PRAYER MISSION - MONTHLY MASS, BENEDICTION, REFLECTION

Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, the Mother Church of our archdiocese, is having a Mass to pray God's special protection, guidance and blessings on the many needs of our archdiocese. Please give this important initiative your support. This monthly Mass, Benediction and brief reflection will be on **Thu 29 Aug, 7.30pm** at the Cathedral. For further details, please call the Cathedral office at 6337 2036.

FAMILY LIFE SOCIETY: MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER (OCT - DEC)

"Marriage is a project to be worked on together ... and a process of growth." - Pope Francis (Amoris Laetitia, no. 218, 221). Good marriages can always be made better. To deepen and refine your couple relationship, sign up for one of the coming Marriage Encounter Weekends: **4 - 6 Oct, 1 - 3 Nov & 6 - 8 Dec**. Contact David & Clara at 9670 5390 or register at mewkend@gmail.com

FAMILY LIFE SOCIETY: LOVE LIFE CONFERENCE

Understand the essentials of Life. Hear about the legal, medical and emotional aspects relating to the beginning of life, the options that all mothers have and the impact of abortion. Experts in the related field present and discuss Life. Register now bit.ly/llc_mail or call 6488 0278 (Jacinta) for further enquires.

Date: Fri 27 Sep

Time: 7.15pm - 9.45pm (Light dinner will be provided)

Venue: Lifelong Learning Institute, Lecture Theatre, Level 2 (11 Eunos Rd 8, S408601)

Cost: FOC (Love offerings are welcome)

CELEBRATING LIFE TOGETHER 2019 - MAMRE OAKS CONFERENCE AND TEA DANCE FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Mamre Oaks is organising a conference and tea dance for parents and caregivers of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) on **Sat 14 Sep, 10am - 4pm**, at the **Agape Village** (7A Lor 8, Toa Payoh, Singapore 319264). Please register at QR code or call 6801 7476 / email to admin@mamreoaks.sg for more queries. Admission is free.



LANDINGS: WELCOMING RETURNING CATHOLICS

We invite Catholics seeking a reconnection with the Faith and those interested in this ministry to participate in this 10-week programme. Interested participants will need to register. Registration closes on **Mon 2 Sep**. The next Landings programme will be available in the following parishes from September:

Date	Parish	Day	Time
13 Sep - 29 Nov	Cathedral of the Good Shepherd	Fri	7.30pm - 9.30pm
16 Sep - 2 Dec	Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour	Mon	8pm - 10pm

Please email returning@landings.org.sg or find out more at www.landings.org.sg.

Jesus is alive... Jesus is real

**A CER testimony by
Melissa Low**



I was baptised five years ago in 2014. Six, seven years back, I was undergoing a very difficult period in my life. I was depressed, to the extent of having suicidal thoughts. In that time of darkness and desperation, I felt a prompting from Jesus to come to church. Sitting in the pews, I felt a sense of peace that I had not felt in a long time, and decided to sign up for RCIA. In all honesty, I went through my RCIA journey feeling indifferent with no further encounter with Jesus. However, in my mind, and perhaps because of my semi-Catholic upbringing, I believed in Jesus.

In 2017, I hit a roadblock in my faith. I was already involved in church and parish activities. However, I was not happy and I still felt empty. The only reason that kept me holding on to the faith, was the recognition that Jesus saved me from destruction a few years back, as well as the peace I had while I was in church. Doubts crept into my mind and I wondered to myself, was this all there was to faith? Was I just chasing a feeling of peace? Who was Jesus really?

I had already heard a lot about the Conversion Experience Retreat (CER) from my friends, who described it as the *"mother of all retreats"*. Being stuck in faith crisis mode, I decided to go ballot for it, and I managed to get a slot at CER#56. I felt so *"heng"* and happily shared with my Catholic friends how lucky I was to get in on my first try, and they all said that it was not luck, and that I was *"chosen by God"* to attend it. As a young convert, I realised that there were many typical responses that Catholics had. *"Being chosen"* fell into that category, so I dismissed what they said as typical *"Catholic speech"*.

I was very excited about CER and encountering Jesus. Day one came and passed. We had adoration at night, which I dreaded as I did not know how to appreciate it then. Distracted and bored, I fell asleep during the session. That night, I felt so disappointed because a day had gone by and nothing happened.

Day two came. At night, to my horror, there was adoration again. A CER ministry member motioned for us to move closer to the monstrance. In a typical kiasu Singaporean fashion, I decided to do so as I thought perhaps Jesus worked more powerfully in those closest in proximity to him. Similar to the first night, I started drifting off and thinking that this retreat was not working out. It was the end of day two and still nothing. And then, Jesus spoke.

He first addressed my thoughts about being lucky that I got into CER, and said, *"It was not luck. I chose you, and I am glad you came."* My retreat theme was around the Samaritan woman at the well, and he continued, *"You are the Samaritan woman, and I have been waiting at the well for you"*. Jesus then showed and told me about my life, about my five husbands which were the painful shadows of my life, the mistakes as well as the poor choices I made that I was ashamed of.

I then received an image of him standing outside a door, with no door knob on his side. For him to come into my house, I had to open the door from the inside. Jesus said, *"Through all your trials and tribulations, I was always there with you. I was always knocking but you never answered, and all I could do was to look at you through the window. I am happy that you have finally opened the door, and here I am now."* Coming for CER was my way of responding and opening my heart to him. I cannot put into words how overwhelmed I felt. I felt his love, forgiveness and mercy just gushing through my entire body and my heart was just bursting for joy. For the first time in my life, I knew surely and truly, that Jesus is alive, that Jesus is real. I was already converted in my mind, but that fateful day, I was converted in my heart.



Melissa (holding the sign of 'Child of God') with her friends.

Today, I continue my active involvement in parish and the Office for Young People. The difference is that now I serve with purpose, joy and the conviction in knowing that Jesus is real, that he is faithful and all he wants is for us to come to him.

Brothers and sisters, if my testimony has stirred your heart, and if you crave for an encounter with Jesus, then come sign up for CER. Don't make him wait any longer. All you need to do is reach out and turn your door knob, and let Jesus do the rest.



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg!

Catechetical Awareness Weekend: Reflections of parent catechist Chris Chua



What is catechesis? *It means "to echo" the work of teaching the faith and "instruct in the way of the Lord" (cf. Acts 18:24-25). That is to pass on the message of Jesus Christ, who he is and what he has done. Beyond teaching discipleship and holiness, it is an invitation into a relationship with Jesus.*

Teaching the faith is serious business (cf. Mt18:6). Teach it well, or end up a case of a 'broken telephone', where the original message becomes distorted as it gets passed on.

While I am convinced of this purpose, I entered into the ministry with much apprehension - Do I have the time out of my work commitment? Can I relate to the young ones? Do I have the patience? Am I equipped?"- Nevertheless, the Lord assured me that he is the divine teacher and I am merely his spokesperson. He will take care of the rest. And so it has been five years since I have been a parent catechist.

Journeying with the teens has been very enriching. Learning about their lives, struggles and doubts convinced me even more that only in Christ can we find the answers. Catechising the teens encouraged me to learn more about my faith and enter into a deeper relationship with Jesus. I will not possess all the answers but I will journey with the teens and exemplify a Christian disciple. In doing so, we become disciples making disciples, like the apostles. In catechising, we fit into the Church's master plan of educating the next generation about Christ.

"At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father. . .who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever." (Catechism of the Catholic Church #426)

Indeed, it takes a village to raise a child, and the responsibility of teaching the young ones about our faith lies in all of us. Is God calling you to be a catechist? Get in touch with us via the website or email us on catechism@sfxchurch.sg. Also consider training as a CGS (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd), an approach to the religious formation of children ages 3 to 12. This methodology utilises Montessori teaching principles to help children develop an informed and genuine relationship with God. There will be a CGS formation retreat in Nov at St Joseph Church, Bukit Timah. More information can be found on <https://cgsas.org/about>.

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

ANOIDTING 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 contact inf baptism@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