



**Disciples  
Making Disciples**



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## Being Christ's Advent Witnesses

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
8 Dec 2019

Is 11:1-10  
Rom 15:4-9  
Mt 3:1-12



*"Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God 'Father' and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory."*

- St Basil the Great,  
*De Spiritu Sancto*, CCC736

Every year on this date, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated with deep gratitude as we recall God's gift of Mary for our salvation. As Blessed Pope Pius IX said in establishing this solemnity, "it was wholly fitting that so wonderful a mother should be ever resplendent with the glory of most sublime holiness and so completely free from all taint of original sin..." The Catechism elaborates on the "fittingness" of Mary's

Immaculate Conception by stating, "The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom 'the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily' should herself be 'full of grace.' She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty." (*Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec 8, 1854, CCC 722)

This year, however, this solemnity is celebrated on December 9 as it coincides with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent. Nevertheless, there is a Marian characteristic reflected in how St John the Baptist "[prepared] a way for the Lord." John brought the Good News of God's Kingdom and mercy for repentance to Jerusalem, Judea and all of Jordan. Mary, too, brought the Good News (the Incarnation) to her cousin Elizabeth who was then pregnant with John the Baptist. The Catechism describes Mary's visitation as "a visit from God to his people" because "John was 'filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb' by Christ himself, whom the Virgin Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit." (CCC 717)

The gospel text this Sunday urges us to continue this work of preparing a way for the Lord by witnessing to and proclaiming his offer of mercy. We witness by sharing our own experience of God's mercy received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In Confession, we are not judged or chastised but forgiven, consoled and encouraged to live our life anew in Christ.

St Paul, in today's second reading, speaks of this new life in Christ as being

founded on a strong hope in God's help to be "tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus... united in mind and voice, [and thus]... give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 15:5-6)

We all know that to be this "tolerant" and "united in mind and voice" is not easy. We all tend to demand our own way – a sign of the capital sin of pride that all of us struggle with. Today's first reading, however, is a reminder that God has given us the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome sin and be conformed to Christ. Isaiah's prophecy speaks of Christ as possessing the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, knowledge and awe of God (cf Is 11:2). We received this same Spirit and his gifts at our baptism to grace us to be as "tolerant" and merciful to others as Christ has been to us. Writing about the Holy Spirit in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, St Basil the Great urges believers to have certainty in how close we have been drawn into God's love through baptism, "Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God 'Father' and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory." (*De Spiritu Sancto*, CCC736)

As we move into another week of our Advent preparation to meet Christ at his second coming, let us unceasingly call on the Holy Spirit to help us exercise the seven gifts given us. Like our Immaculate Mother and St John the Baptist, may the Spirit help us set out in haste to be heralds of God's mercy - that all who repent and now bear good fruits will surely be welcomed into the Church and into his Kingdom!

## Announcements

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

### GIFT COLLECTION

As next weekend is 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 to support the organisations and projects of the archdiocese. Every Catholic is encouraged to sign up for a pledge to help with continued support for the numerous archdiocesan organisations needed for the mission of the church. More information is available at [catholicfoundation.sg](http://catholicfoundation.sg)

### TOTAL COLLECTED FROM SECOND COLLECTION

With your kind donations last weekend, the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP) was able to raise **\$13,573.40** for Friends In Need. We thank you for your generosity and continued support of our activities.

### SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Come join us and 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.

### PENITENTIAL SERVICES IN SERANGOON DISTRICT

All services are held at 8pm.

- **Thu 12 Dec** - Church of The Immaculate Heart of Mary
- **Mon 16 Dec** - Church of St Francis Xavier
- **Tue 17 Dec** - St Anne's Church
- **Wed 18 Dec** - Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- **Thu 19 Dec** - Church of the Transfiguration
- **Fri 20 Dec** - Church of St. Vincent de Paul

## CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE



24 DEC (TUE)		
Pageant		5pm
Family Christmas Eve Mass		5.30pm
Carolling		8.30pm
Christmas Eve Mass		9pm
Carolling		11.30pm
Midnight Mass		12mn
25 DEC (WED)		
	9am, 11am, 5.30pm	

### TRIDUUM & FEAST DAY CELEBRATION - THANK YOU!

The Parish Priests and the organising committee would like to express their appreciation to all volunteers who have helped to make our Triduum and Feast Day a fruitful event. Thank you for your enthusiastic participation and we congratulate all winners of the lucky draw held during the Feast Day dinner.

### 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.

### ADVENT: PREPARE HIM ROOM

Calling all youths and young adults! Would you like to spend some time finding the true reason of the Christmas season? The 1Cor12 community will be having a night of praise, preaching and prayer to prepare room in our hearts to receive the baby Christ this Christmas. All youths and young adults (13 yrs old and above) are welcome! The Lord longs to come and dwell in your heart, and know that you are never too far or broken for Him! Please register online at <https://tinyurl.com/preparehimroom> or scan QR code to register.



**Date:** Fri 13 Dec  
**Time:** 8pm - 10.30pm  
**Venue:** SFX 3-in-1 room, Parish Centre (Level 2)

Please contact Gracemary @ 9487 3173 or Rachel @ 9764 0717 if you have any enquiries.

### FAMILY LIFE SOCIETY: SPECIAL ROSARY AND MASS

To celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Protectress of the Unborn, a special rosary and mass will be held on **Thur 12 Dec** at the **Cathedral of The Good Shepherd** (A, Queen Street, S188533). **Rosary** will start at **7pm** followed by **mass** at **7.30pm**.

### ONE: LOVE IN THE CITY

Have you been reaching out to someone who needs Jesus or journeying with someone to know Jesus better? Why not come and watch Minister of Loneliness, a 75 mins drama by Walk on Water Productions and the Office for the New Evangelisation (ONE). It tells the story of David's travels by foot on the Camino de Santiago. For more info, visit [one.org.sg/events](http://one.org.sg/events).

**Date:** Sat 28 Dec  
**Time:** 2.30pm - 4pm  
**Venue:** Agape Village (Multi-purpose Hall)  
**Register:** [tinyurl.com/2019loveinthecity](http://tinyurl.com/2019loveinthecity)



# 60<sup>TH</sup> TRIDUUM & FEAST DAY 2019 THANKSGIVING

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Over the past week, we had the honour and privilege of being graced and preached to by a man of God – Fr Benjamin from Myanmar. Every once in a while in our lives, we come across people who exude this certain sense of other worldliness – people who inspire in us a sense of the hope and joy that awaits us in the eternal life with the Father. Fr Benjamin is one such individual. He carries himself with a certain steadiness, peace and profound humility. It seemed like nothing can shake him because he is standing on solid ground; and over the three days of triduum masses, we got a glimpse into this foundation on which he stands.



What was constant throughout his preaching and sharing, was his deep gratitude to the Lord for blessing him with what he has – his life, his education, and many divine appointments in his vocation as a priest and father to the poor and orphans. Throughout his preaching across the three days, he invited all of us to develop a spirit of gratitude and encouraged us to begin to count the many blessings in our lives, including things that we tend to take for granted such as clean drinking water, electricity etc. that many around the world lack. With this sense of thanksgiving and gratitude, Fr Benjamin further encouraged and invited us all to render our lives in service of the Lord. Fr Benjamin preached with an authority that came from living as he preached that has certainly stirred many hearts, including mine.



Indeed, the Lord has blessed you and I abundantly in our lives, and sometimes we are tempted to forget these blessings because our lives also have its fair share of difficulties and trials. However, Fr Benjamin's ability to praise and be thankful to God even amidst his trials and material poverty reminds me that I too can give thanks to God amidst life's difficulties, and with this thanksgiving, to render my life in service to Him who provides and loves. What are you thankful for this day?

**"The deeper your encounter with the Lord is, the greater you will want to speak of Jesus to spread his Good News to all of humanity."**







This theme of thanksgiving continued into the Feast day mass where Archbishop encouraged the parish to remember and be thankful for how the Lord has made a difference in our lives. He also shared his dream for the parish of Saint Francis Xavier: that as the church undergoes renovation and upgrading of the infrastructure, that we too restore the interior spirit of the Church. He challenged the parish as a whole to be concerned about helping others encounter the Lord and further shared that we can only help others encounter Christ only if we have true gratitude of how the Lord has transformed our own lives.



He reminded all present that the parish's biggest concern should not be about increasing the number of programmes held, but how the parish can help others encounter the Lord. Without having a deep encounter and love for the Lord, he added, our service in church ministries become mere projects and activities. He then posed a challenge to the parish, to invest in individuals who are ready to give their lives for Jesus and to invest in forming them in pastoral skills to help the church to grow. He affirmed the parish of Saint Francis Xavier, that though a relatively small parish in numbers, are filled with people who are passionate about Jesus Christ. He ended his homily by encouraging parishioners to do more to build communities and in proclaiming Jesus to others.



***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***  
(Matthew 5:3)



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

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