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How to love your enemies

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time
23 Feb 2020

Lev 19:1-2, 17-18
1Cor 3:16-23
Mt 5:38-48

In today's Gospel, we are called to submit to a very challenging demand made by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount: "But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well." (Mt 5:39)

If that was not hard enough, he then said: "You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Mt 5:43-44)

How many of us are able to live up to this? The inclination is to do the exact opposite: To fight our enemies and retaliate with equal force. It is human nature to do so and we often rationalise our action in the name

of self-defence. Why then did Christ make such an impossible request when he must know it cannot be met, and what should we do to fulfill his will?

The answer to this question lies at the heart of our faith – and part of the answer has to do with the nature of human understanding. In other words, how exactly do we discover God's will? Today's second reading hints at the answer: "Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God." (1 Cor 3:18-19) St Paul tells us that trying to understand God's will through our own effort and logic will always fail because that is what God never intended when he made us. That is why it will be impossible for us to turn the other cheek and to love our enemies if we try to do it without divine help.

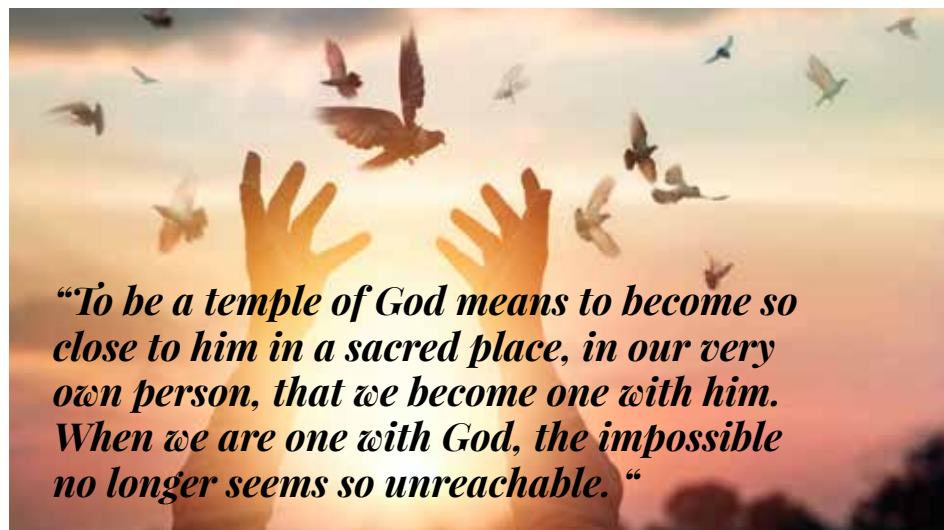
This divine help is within us as St Paul points out - we are the "temple of God", and that "the temple of God is sacred, and you are that temple." (1 Cor 3:17) This is where our salvation

lies. God knows the foolishness of our ways and he has put his Spirit into us and made us capable of knowing him and, in doing so, achieving holiness (cf 1 Cor 3:16).

This is such a comforting thought, it should be cause for immense wonder and joy. To be a temple of God means to become so close to him in a sacred place, in our very own person, that we become one with him. When we are one with God, the impossible no longer seems so unreachable.

Our salvation thus lies within ourselves but it was made possible only because God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to earth and eventually to sacrifice his life for us so that we can receive his Spirit and achieve the seemingly impossible. Right until the very moment before he died on the cross, Jesus showed us what perfect forgiveness was like when he prayed for our salvation: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34) It was the ultimate expression of what he meant when he said we have to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. CCC 2843 puts it aptly: "It is not in our power to feel, or to forget, an offence, but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession."

Forgiving is not impossible but we have to believe Jesus is the Messiah sent by God for our salvation. God is waiting for us; he yearns and urges us all the time to do his will. When we do, the saving power he has given us through his Spirit has accomplished in us what he desires for us, "You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5:48)



"To be a temple of God means to become so close to him in a sacred place, in our very own person, that we become one with him. When we are one with God, the impossible no longer seems so unreachable."

Announcements

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

OFFICE RELOCATION TO MAIN CHURCH BASEMENT

Please kindly note that the Parish Office is now located at the basement of the Main Church.

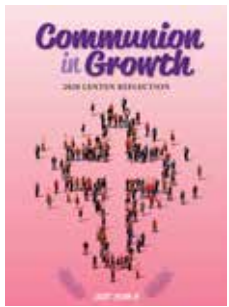
THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

It is available via appointment only. You can contact the Parish Office to make an appointment.

L10 RETREAT CANCELLED

Please note that the L10 retreat has been cancelled.

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 Lent2020).

MASS ONLINE



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 indefinite suspension of Masses, income collection has greatly decreased. On top of utilities, staff salaries, etc. our church has the renovation to finance. 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**). You can hand it to the Parish Office or use envelopes labelled **Mass Collection** and drop it into the Mass Offering Box outside the Parish Office. Envelopes can be found next to the Mass Offering Box.

You may mail the cheques to **63A Chartwell Drive S(558758)**

- **PayNow!**

1. Launch **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 & understanding.

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.

Five Ways to get the most out of televised Mass



1



PUT GOD FIRST

Schedule your Mass hour when planning your Sunday, rather than hoping for “free time” which may never come. Make yourself available for the whole broadcast, instead of stopping and starting to fit around your other priorities. Resist the temptation to make yourself “Lord” of the Mass.

“The sabbath brings everyday work to a halt and provides a respite. It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money.” (CCC 2172)

2



PREPARE YOUR PRAYER SPACE

Look at the area where you plan to watch the broadcast. Is it suitably quiet and tidy so you can pray without distraction? Can you enhance the atmosphere, eg., light a candle or dim the room lights?

3



PREPARE YOUR BODY

Physical circumstances put us in the right frame of mind. Before turning on the broadcast, satisfy your body’s needs (e.g. bathroom, hunger). Avoid snacking during the broadcast.

While you need not put on “Mass clothes”, simple actions such as washing your face and changing into a clean shirt can help you feel refreshed and ready to pray.

Pray the Mass by making the appropriate hand gestures (eg. signs of the Cross) even if you do not adopt the bodily postures (eg. standing for the Gospel) or sing the hymns.

4



BE PRESENT

Resist the urge to multitask. Close the other apps on your computer, especially instant messaging. Free yourself from the slavery of always needing to feel “connected”. This is your time to connect with Christ. Similarly, reject the temptation to be “efficient” by watching Mass while doing the household chores.

Prayer “is an absolute waste of time, it is a sharing into the waste of time which is the interior life of the Godhead... [God] is love, and his life is not like the life of the worker or artist but of lovers wasting time with each other uselessly.” (Fr. Herbert McCabe OP)

Family needs (e.g. care of infants or the elderly) are legitimate reasons for pausing the Mass broadcast, but do return as soon as possible.

5



SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Since you cannot receive Holy Communion, pray a Spiritual one. The prayer of St. Alphonsus Liguori is recommended; but feel free to express its sentiments in your own words:

“My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.”

While the suspension of public Masses nationwide is a tragic necessity, this is also our opportunity to stand in solidarity with Christians around the world who do not have the chance to keep the Sabbath holy, or to attend Sunday worship. Let us pray fervently as a diocese for an end to the COVID-19 epidemic and a swift resumption of public Mass.



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg

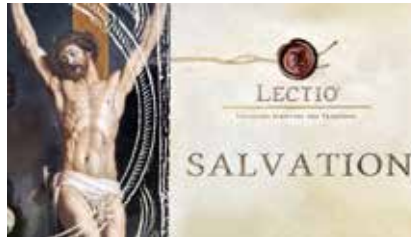
FORMED

Using FORMED for Lent 2020

Lent is just a few days away! The FORMED Team has put together some tips on how to make the most out of FORMED during this Lenten season.

VIDEO: Lectio: Salvation with Dr. Michael

At every Sunday Mass, Catholics confess that Jesus came down from heaven "for us men and for our salvation." But what does "salvation" mean? In this remarkable 10-part video series, Scripture scholar and theologian Michael Patrick Barber provides a thorough, deeply Catholic, and deeply biblical, answer. Based on the best-selling book **Salvation: What Every Catholic Should Know**, this video series is inspiring, engaging, and accessible to anyone.



VIDEO: Lenten Reflections with Dr. Tim Gray

He is waiting for you. Will you respond to his call? Join us for a 40-day journey of welcoming his tender love, beginning with these short, daily videos from Scripture scholar Dr. Tim Gray. Live in Christ's love and let him transform your life as you watch these awakening reflections during Lent 2020.



VIDEO: FORGIVEN

Forgiven explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows how this sacrament of mercy reveals the depth and bounty of God's love. By looking at God's revelation of his mercy in Scripture and making a step-by-step examination of the Rite itself, **Forgiven** communicates God's invitation to each one of us to come experience his indescribable love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



VIDEO: Br Francis: Let's Learn about Lent

Join Brother Francis in this compact presentation of what Lent is all about and how we observe it as Catholics. Great for the whole family!



Free FORMED Access for SFX Parishioners

Getting FORMED on your mobile

(Scan with your camera/reader app)

iPhone users:



Android users:



New Viewers

Go to <https://sfxchurch.formed.org/>.

Fill out the registration form.

A verification eMail will be sent to you.

Existing Viewers

if you forgot how to log in, go to www.formed.org, look at the top right and click the LOGIN button. Use your own login email and password.

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