
 **Parish Office:**
6280 6076, secretariat@sfxchurch.sg

 **St Francis Xavier Kindergarten:**
6280 8929, sfx_kindergarten@sfxchurch.sg

Disciples
Making Disciples

 **Parish Priest:**
Rev Fr Benedict Chng
6288 0484
FrBenChng@sfxchurch.sg

Assistant Priests:
Rev Fr Jude David
(on Study Leave)
Frjude@sfxchurch.sg

Rev Fr Vinukumar
6280 8331
Vinukumar@catholic.org.sg

Priest in Residence:
Rev Fr Brian D'Souza
6282 3151
FrBrian@sfxchurch.sg

Jesus delivers us from evil

1st Sunday of Lent
01 Mar 2020

Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Rom 5:12-19
Mt 4:1-11

In today's Gospel, we witness Jesus being tested yet remaining steadfast in faith after being revealed as the Son of God at the river Jordan. Although the text reads "Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil", the temptation was by no means the work of the Holy Spirit. Reminiscent of Psalm 23, it is an assurance that God walks with us "through the valley of the shadow of death." The Spirit accompanied Jesus and never left even as he was tested by the devil. As we begin our Lenten journey, CCC 540 teaches us, "By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert." We learn how to be faithful like Jesus in our own trials and temptations.

The words of the devil give great insights on the strategies he uses. His first tactic is to get us to focus on our material and palpable reality. The devil appeals to Jesus' physical hunger, as he did with Israel in their desert wanderings. Despite God's assurance of manna, the Israelites hoarded and complained. Jesus quotes Moses' rebuke to the Israelites, that "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Deut 8:3) In recent days, perhaps our own fears and self-preservation were similarly expressed in the

ungracious hoarding of supplies to the detriment of others. We can learn from this instance here that ensuring our individual nourishment is not enough; we also need to heed God's commandments, especially in caring for our neighbour and the common good. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI teaches us in his book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, "[R]efusing to acknowledge the reality of anything beyond the political and material, while setting God aside as an illusion—that is the temptation that threatens us in many varied forms."

The devil's second tactic swings to the other extreme. It ignores the material reality altogether, placing spiritual realities on a pedestal. This time the devil introduces conditions that Jesus will need to fulfil to prove himself. Jesus again echoes Moses' rebuke of the Israelites for putting God to the test (Deut 6:16). Demanding works of miracles to insist that God proves his faithfulness is an act of distrust. Continuing from the same example, it is an act of trust when we can recognise the necessity of the temporary suspension of Masses as a precautionary measure to stop the spread of COVID-19. Partaking of our Lord wholeheartedly in spiritual nourishment at this time shows a great act of faith, that God comes through for us and reaches us even in our human limitations.

Thirdly, we see how the wilderness, analagous to the darkness in our lives, can sometimes lead us to idolatry out of desperation. The Israelites left at the foot of the mountain must have felt abandoned

and had forgotten the goodness of God. Pope Francis in his homily on 18 Feb 2014 said, "Temptation closes us in, takes away the ability to see ahead, closes every horizon and in this way leads us to sin." Without excusing ourselves, there is a need to acknowledge the original sin of Adam and our sharing of the wounded human nature. Despite his own human weariness, the sinless Jesus' final overcoming of temptation gives us much hope, for it foreshadows his eventual triumph over Satan.

"Jesus rebuffs these attacks, which recapitulate the temptations of Adam in Paradise and of Israel in the desert." (CCC 538) We no longer need to fear for Christ has done what we could not, bringing life and acquittal to us all. The Second Reading further explains that "the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall." (Rom 5:15) For if through one act of transgression, many died, and if through one gift of Jesus Christ, many were acquitted despite the many transgressions, how abundant the grace indeed that one gift brought! In this season of Lent, as we strive to grow in spiritual strength, we can take heart in Christ Jesus who has overcome the powers of evil and continues to deliver us every day.

By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert (CCC 540).

Announcements

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

PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

Due to renovation works, the Parish Office will be closed **this weekend 29 - 1 Mar**. For any emergency, you can still contact the Parish Office at 6280 6076.

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

<https://go.catholic.sg/mass>

**Sundays at 10am
Mon to Sat at 1pm**

URGENT APPEAL

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
FOR RESUMPTION OF WEEKEND MASSES**

My dear people,

Peace be with you!

This has been a difficult and trying time for all of us. We know that you are missing the celebration of the Eucharist and with you, we have been praying that it will resume as soon as possible.

In preparation for this eventuality, we need **at least 50 volunteers (aged 25 - 60) per Mass** to assist in the various measures (e.g. temperature taking, sanitising, registration for contact tracing, ushers, etc) that need to be carried out before each Mass.

If you can assist, please scan the QR code or fill in the google form via <http://tiny.cc/SFXHelpingHands>. Alternatively, you can also pick up the volunteer form from the Parish Office on Mon 2 Mar and submit by **Wed 4 Mar**. All volunteers will need to attend a compulsory briefing session on either of the following days: **Thu 5 Mar, 8pm** or **Sat 7 Mar, 11am**.



Please note that Masses can only commence when there are sufficient volunteers, so we earnestly appeal for your support.

*Yours in Christ,
Fr Benedict Chng and Fr Vinukumar*

SFX MASS COLLECTIONS (CASH/CHEQUE/PAYNOW)

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**

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.

How To Choose your Lenten Practices

Lent is a season in which we prepare to receive the gift of our salvation anew. Too often we approach Lent as though it were a series of New Year's resolutions: to give up a particular bad habit, or share more with the poor, or be more faithful to prayer. But Lent is not about self-improvement. Lent is a time of conversion in which God is in charge of our conversion. Not us.

Each year the Church gives us six weeks to take a long, loving look at our lives to see if our values and priorities are in line with God's desires for us. Since most of us find that we've wandered from God's path, Lent becomes that second chance, or do-over, to "return to God with our whole heart." To do so, we may have to think of choosing our Lenten practices well as they help us to detach from the world and open ourselves up to receive the love of God more fully and to love him more perfectly.

Have you thought of what Lenten practices you and your family would like to observe this year especially now that public masses and other forms of large gatherings are suspended due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus?

We all may be guilty of "just picking something to give up" now and again, but in doing so we miss out on the beautiful opportunity that Lent provides us. All the practices represent attempts to make the season of Lent a meaningful time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving for ourselves, their loved ones, and their communities. Invite family members to share their thoughts, hopes, and desires for Lent. Decide to support one another in whatever you choose to do. As you journey through this annual second chance, remember that each step brings you closer to the welcoming arms of our loving God.

Here are a few questions to pray with and reflect on when choosing your Lenten practices this year:

#1. IS THIS ACTUALLY A SACRIFICE FOR ME?

Jesus gave everything on the cross, I can do something that is inconvenient or causes discomfort.

If giving up your favourite food is a sacrifice for you, then go for it! It may not be seen by others as a big sacrifice which makes the sacrifice a good opportunity to grow in humility too!



#2. WHAT DISTRACTS ME MOST FROM WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT AND HOW CAN I ADDRESS IT?

Although the #1 obvious answer to "what is important" here is God, this question can also be expanded to what our state in life is, or where God has asked us to serve specifically. By staying faithful to what He has called us to (in terms of vocation, career, etc.) we are actively loving Him.

Here are a few more questions to consider: Does scrolling through social media take away time you should be spending in prayer? Does watching Netflix cause you to neglect opportunities to serve family or take care of daily chores? Do you focus too much on other's faults (or your own) and fail to see Christ in them? Do you complain as opposed to recognizing the opportunity God has provided to offer a small sacrifice for love of Him?

#3. HOW CAN IT HELP ME TO LOVE?

We always need to direct our actions to God and others. Our practices shouldn't be done selfishly for ourselves with no impact on our relationships.



**HOLY FATHER'S
PRAYER INTENTIONS
THIS MONTH**

EVANGELISATION - CATHOLICS IN CHINA

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

IN THE MONTH OF FEB 2020

CONDOLENCES

We offer our prayers to the families of the following who have returned to the Lord:

1. Caroline Hannah Lee Chin Fung
2. Ong Teck Lee Billy
3. Raphael Anthony
4. Martin Koh Tian Jan

BAPTISMS

We welcome:

1. Goh Rui Qiao Charlotte

Here are a few more things to consider – what your Lenten penances **should not be:**

- They should not be something you've been meaning to do anyway. For example, you have been meaning to go on a diet and therefore will give up sweets for Lent. Or, this could also be spiritual practice related too.
- Practices should not be chosen (or avoided) for those around you and they should not negatively impact those around you.
- You should not compare penances or brag about them. We all need work in different areas!

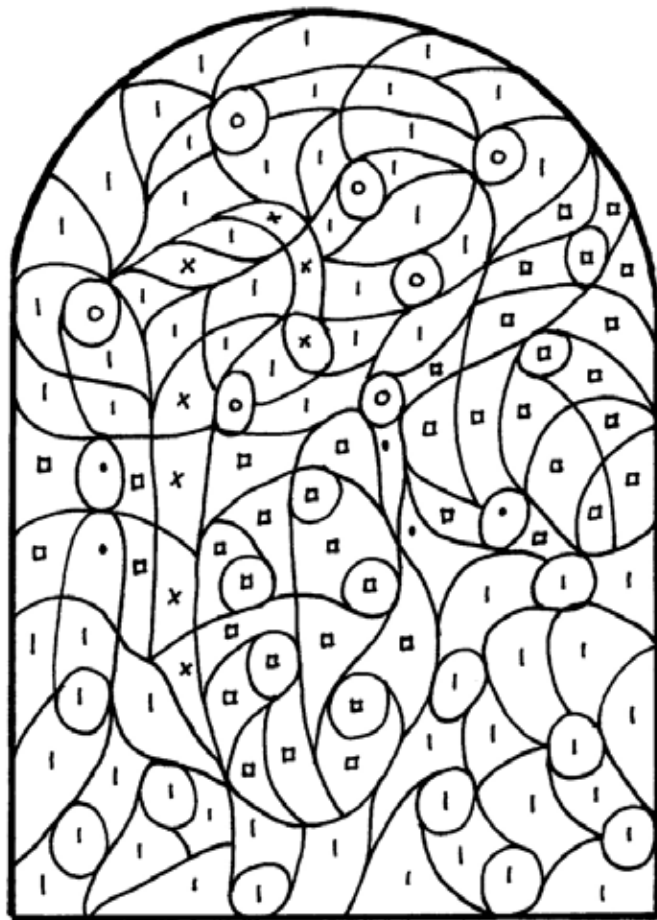
Lastly, consider making your Lenten practice a forever practice!

If you are giving something up that is distracting you from God, it's probably a good idea to just give it up altogether. Or, if you are convicted you should be praying a daily Rosary for Lent, then consider making that a regular part of your spiritual life post-Lent. There is no reason to stop doing the good habits we form during the season.

Sources: Catholic link, Ignatian Spirituality.com, Loyola Press



Today's first reading tells us about sin. Use the code at the bottom to colour in the spaces and find out what the story was.



- blue
- | green
- x brown
- red
- skin colour



Mass Timings

Opening Hours

WEEKEND MASSES

Suspended until further notice

PARISH OFFICE

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

WEEKDAY MASSES

Suspended until further notice

ADORATION ROOM

Temporarily closed

MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Suspended until further notice

LIBRARY

Temporarily closed

HOLY HOUR

Suspended until further notice

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