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## The Resurrection and the Life

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
29 Mar 2020

Ez 37:12-14

Rom 8:8-11

Jn 11:1-45

In the thick of Lent, even as we fast and repent from our sins, Jesus points us towards Easter and definitively asserts his power over death. In this regard, three details illustrate why this Sunday's gospel carry so much hope for us.

First, Jesus reminds us: "I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (Jn 11:25-26) These are not mere words. Jesus backs up his declaration with a miracle that unequivocally proves what he just said.

This seems to be his exact intention. Although he received news early that Lazarus was ill, he deliberately waited two more days before going to Judaea. He reveals his motives: "This sickness will not end in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified." He reiterates this later: "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe." (Jn 11:4, 14-15)

This explains why we see this verse so often at wakes and funerals. For us Christians, death is not definitive; it is only a prelude to the final victory. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said at St Peter's Square in March 2008, "Bodily death is a sleep from which God can awake us at any moment."

This brings us to the second point: "as Pope Francis said in St Peter's Square in April 2014, Jesus' miracle



**"Christ is not resigned to the tombs that we have built for ourselves with our choice for evil and death, with our errors, with our sins. He is not resigned to this! He invites us, almost orders us, to come out of the tomb in which our sins have buried us. He calls us insistently to come out of the darkness of that prison in which we are enclosed, content with a false, selfish and mediocre life. 'Come out!', he says to us, 'Come out!'. It is an invitation to true freedom, to allow ourselves to be seized by these words of Jesus who repeats them to each one of us today. It is an invitation to let ourselves be freed from the 'bandages', from the bandages of pride."**

**— Pope Francis, Angelus at St Peter's Square, 6 April 2014**

is too great, too clearly divine to be tolerated by the high priests, who, learning of the fact, decided to kill Jesus."

And yet, Jesus never shies away from this final straw. To glorify God, he approaches the tomb and orders Lazarus to come out. In so doing, he himself was put to death. How much more does our Resurrected Lord invite us to come out of our own tombs!

As Pope Francis said, "He invites us, almost orders us, to come out of the tomb in which our sins have buried us. He calls us insistently to come out of the darkness of that prison in which we are enclosed, content with a false and mediocre life... It is an invitation to let ourselves be freed from the 'bandages', from the bandages of pride."

But Jesus' clear divinity does not impede him from feeling sorrow — this is the third point. Seeing Mary and Martha, he too was in "great distress" and "wept". This is true "com-*passion*": Jesus is suffering with those who suffer because of death.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI thus said, "Christ's heart is divine-human: in him God and man meet perfectly, without separation and without confusion. He is the image, or rather, the incarnation of God who is love, mercy, and maternal tenderness, of God who is Life."

When we suffer too, when we mourn those who have passed, we can thus be sure that Jesus mourns and weeps together with us. And that compassion gives us hope that he will awaken those who have passed from this world and that they will share in his glory.

## Announcements

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

### CATHOLICNEWS

Grab the latest copy of CatholicNews outside the Parish Office.

### CLOSURE OF GROTTA

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 and do bring your own surgical face mask along.

### ONLINE CHILDREN'S MASS

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

### ONE: EASTER REFLECTION BOOKLET 2020

The Office for the New Evangelisation has produced a booklet of reflections for the season of Easter. The theme is **"Singing Alleluia in Communion"**.



The booklet is available outside the Parish Office and online at [tinyurl.com/20easterbooklet](http://tinyurl.com/20easterbooklet).

### 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!

### SSVP: DONATIONS FOR FRIENDS IN NEED(FINS)

The poor and needy are still in need of financial assistance during this period of COVID-19. Please do offer your generous support so that they can continue to aid their Friends in Need (FINS) with your donations. We thank you for your generosity. To find out more, visit [ssvpsingapore.org](http://ssvpsingapore.org).

You can scan the QR Code using your bank app or issue a cheque to **"SSVP NC Singapore"** and mail it to **Society of St Vincent de Paul, 7A, Lor 8, Toa Payoh, #04-01, Agape Village, Singapore 319264**.



### 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! Here is our second testimony..*



## *"Surrendering My Pain to Jesus"*

*- Vivien Mak, 19*

Before coming to the School of Witness, I was contented with life. I didn't discern about coming to SOW or make any big sacrifices but was pressured by my older brother. So I signed up and told myself if I get in, I get in. Thus, I found myself on this 2-month journey, completely unprepared and with no expectations.

Growing up, I decided that the best way to live was to be independent and depend on no one emotionally. I didn't need anyone or anything because I knew what's best for me and I could trust only me. This was because when I was in primary 6, I was hurt and betrayed by my close friends. One day, they decided to stop talking to me without any explanation. Once, I was coincidentally walking behind them but they accused me of stalking them and being obsessed with them. This left a deep wound within me. This was compounded by the harsh words I received from my eldest brother and father growing up. To protect myself, I decided it was safest to keep my inner thoughts and feelings to myself, and rely on my strength alone. I was enough for me, and I didn't need God.

During the week on wholeness in SOW, I struggled badly. The sessions and

reflections dug up old and painful events in the past, and I really struggled to trust God and accept his love for me in those periods. I started to feel anger and despair at God as I felt that I had already reconciled these painful moments on my own but now God wanted me to relive the pain again. To cope with these hurts, I always chose to belittle my pain, telling myself that others had greater hurts than I. To be told to leave this mindset behind was difficult. Upon further reflection, I knew I had to face the truth that I needed healing from these hurts. However, I kept running away from God's love because I felt unworthy.

One day, I saw a vision of myself lying paralysed in fear. I felt like a lost cause, unable to open my heart to Jesus, unable to surrender control because of the walls I had put around my heart that I didn't know how to take down. I had unknowingly let these hurts affect my perception of God. One night however, as I lay on a bench, I saw a clear night sky full of stars. For me, it was a reminder of God's promise that even when I felt like I couldn't move, He meets me where I am. Truly, when I wanted to be quietly forgotten, Jesus demanded that I be seen. His relentless prodding finally pushed me to take the first step to Him when my cell group carried me to the cross during a paraliturgy. He spoke truths through them over me and broke

through my walls of unbelief to rely on him. I felt peace and hope, and that Jesus leaves none of his beloved behind to fend for themselves, including me. I realized that wholeness is not about being completely healed and free of pain, but in surrendering the pain to Jesus.

Now looking back, I see how God has always been faithful. The things I thought were achieved by me, were actually achieved by his strength in me. I have come to realise that he is my safe place where I can rest before I continue to take on the world! Jesus wants to do great things for all of us, but first we must allow him to. Despite the discomfort, I have learned to pray to surrender things that weigh my heart down. When in the past I thought it was useless to surrender, I now claim that every time I pray for surrender it gets easier to trust in him. I try to live excellently in bringing joy and love to those around me for His glory, and I continue to walk this journey with him. His promises remain unbroken, and as He has shown me my sky full of stars, I hope you can also start to see your own sky full of stars too!

**"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken."**

*- Psalm 62:5-6*

# Spiritual Books to Read During the Quarantine



In today's uncertain health climate, many of us find ourselves with more time to read than we've had in a long time. Looking around at what to pick up from the library or order online during this time of quarantine? We have you covered. Here are eight books for spiritual reading to bring you peace!

## **He and I by Gabrielle Bossis**

This book by Gabrielle Bossis recounts her dialogue as a mystic speaking with Jesus. She was a lay woman in the 20th century in France. The beautiful and intimate language she shares with the Lord brings a joyful dynamic to our own prayer lives.

## **Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis**

Each chapter is brief and focuses on how to build a life of virtue and deepen our prayer lives.

## **Introduction to the Devout Life by Saint Francis de Sales**

This provides an overarching plan, approach, and means to live a deep spiritual life even for those living in the world.

## **The Spiritual Combat by Dom Lorenzo Scupoli**

Dom Scupoli guides the reader through brief chapters that hone in on different aspects of the spiritual life, particular pitfalls, and assistance in spiritual growth. He acknowledges we are never at rest and encourages us not to be complacent.

## **Divine Mercy in My Soul: Diary of Saint Faustina**

Saint Faustina suffered greatly but was accompanied by Our Lord in her suffering. She shares the story of her mystical experience with the Lord and provides great support for those of us suffering at this time.

## **Story of a Soul by Saint Therese of Lisieux**

This holy Doctor of the Church wrote her autobiography in the late 19th century, and her wisdom of the "Little Way" offers so much depth for us today. Make your way through her words and stories. Let them soak into your everyday life.

## **Ignatius Catholic Study Bible (New Testament) with notes by Dr. Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch**

This Catholic translation of the New Testament has thorough and helpful footnotes by renown scholars, Dr. Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch.

## **Rise Up by Blessed is She**

If your kids are now at home for the foreseeable future, read through this book on the virtues. It will be edifying for adults and kids alike!

Article adapted from <https://blessedishe.net/the-blog/spiritual-reading-prayers-quarantine>



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



For more information, please contact the Parish Office for Baptism of Infants.

### 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)