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Disciples
Making Disciples

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Jesus' Trust in Me

Divine Mercy Sunday
19 Apr 2020

Ac 2:42-47
1 Pt 1:3-9
Jn 20:19-31

Between 1930 and 1938, St Faustina Kowalska reported receiving visits from Jesus who spoke to her about the abundant mercy of God for his people especially for poor sinners. He requested for her to paint a vision of the blood and water flowing from his sacred heart, and gave her a chaplet to be recited at 3pm each afternoon (the Hour of Great Mercy). He also instructed her to establish a Feast of Mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter — a culmination of the novena to the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy which would begin on Good Friday. This Feast was added to the General Roman Calendar at St Faustina's canonisation in 2000.

We have taken to praying this particular chaplet frequently in this period of the Covid-19 pandemic even outside of Holy Week. In the face of suffering, it is surely a good thing to turn to the Lord and not challenge God's omnipotence with cynicism. Yet, if we take the ill advice of Job's friends to repent and beg for God's mercy without much thought, we may be falling into a misguided perception of who God is — a God who has to be appeased with sacrifices and prayers, as though the coronavirus was sent as a punishment for something we need to atone for. By having that mindset, "we see above all a relationship of inequality between the one offering it and the one

receiving it... we are quick to deduce that mercy belittles the receiver." (*Dives in Misericordia* 6)

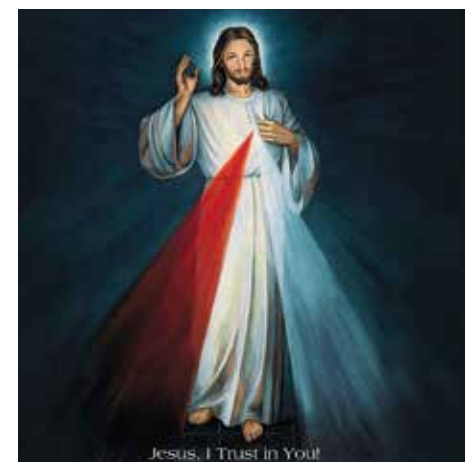
The true understanding of divine mercy however is based on the experience of an enlightened recognition of dignity that is proper to both God and man — a revelation that Jesus alone elicits. Although God dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tm 6:16), we come to know him through Jesus, who says, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9) The Father's love and mercy is incarnated and made visible through Jesus' actions and words, and finally through his death on the cross and his resurrection. "The truth revealed in Christ about God the Father of mercies, enables us to see him as particularly close to man especially when man is suffering, when he is under threat at the very heart of his existence and dignity." (*Dives in Misericordia* 2)

Indeed the Second Reading (1 Pt 1:3-9) today exhorts us to hold on to faith in all that the resurrection brings, even though we have not seen Jesus, even though for a little while now we may have to suffer various trials. It is with this trust that we beseech God to hear us in these difficult times. In an essay, *The Efficacy of Prayer*, C.S. Lewis says, "The very question 'Does prayer work?' puts us in the wrong frame of mind from the outset... Can we believe that God ever really modifies his action in response to the suggestions of men? For infinite wisdom does not need telling what is best, and infinite goodness needs no urging to do it." Lewis goes on to explain, "[God] allows soils and weather and animals and the muscles, minds and wills of men to co-operate in the execution of his will... This is how (no light matter)

God makes something — indeed makes gods — out of nothing."

It is not unusual then that Jesus commands his disciples in today's Gospel, those "whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained." (Jn 20:23) When our eyes are opened to see the dignity of God, our brothers and sisters, and ourselves, we can receive the mercy we desperately need, and give the mercy we desperately need to give. Lewis echoes this: "Our act when we pray, must not, any more than all our other acts, be separated from the continuous act of God himself, in which alone all finite causes operate."

As we dive deeper into the Easter mystery and enter yet another week of Singapore's "circuit-breaker" measures, we can pray by being socially responsible, kind with our words, generous in our actions; as well as with great confidence submit ourselves to his holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.



"The Father's love and mercy is incarnated and made visible through Jesus' actions and words, and finally through his death on the cross and his resurrection."

Announcements

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

CHURCH CLOSURE NOTICE

The Singapore government has announced further measures to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 on **Fri 3 Apr**. As such, parish premises including the Parish Office will remain closed. Renovation works are also suspended with effect from **Tue 7 Apr** till **Mon 4 May**. For pastoral care services (e.g anointing, funerals etc), you may still call the Parish Office. Do leave your name, contact number and a brief message, and we will get back to you.

SFX TELEGRAM - FOLLOW US!

Follow us through our official TELEGRAM channel: <https://t.me/sfxchurch>! You will receive the latest official announcements on Parish-wide events/initiatives, reminders, mass timings and the church bulletin on your phone. Telegram is a free app! Information will continue to be available on our SFX website, Facebook, Instagram and our bulletin "The Manna".

HOLY MASS WITH CHILDREN - ONLINE!

Parents with young children, take note! There is a pre-recorded Children's Mass every **Sun, 8am**. Watch it at online at www.youtube.com/catholicsg.

ONE: EASTER REFLECTION BOOKLET 2020

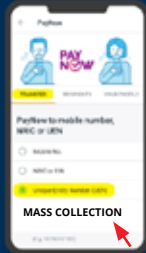
The Office for the New Evangelisation has produced a booklet of reflections for the season of Easter with the theme "**Singing Alleluia in Communion**". You may download the booklet at tinyurl.com/20easterbooklet.



MASS COLLECTION

CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

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 the following options:



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
6. Key in Ref - **Mass Collection**



CHEQUE

1. Payable to **Church of St. Francis Xavier**
2. Mail the cheques to **63A Chartwell Drive Singapore 558758**



GIRO

1. Download Mass Collection Giro Form via sfxchurch.sg/donate
2. Mail the completed form to **63A Chartwell Drive Singapore 558758**

For more information, visit www.catholic.sg/offertory/
Step-by-step guide: www.catholic.sg/transfer-funds-via-paynow/

NEED SOME PRAYERS?

Feeling overwhelmed/stressed or anxious while coping with uncertainty during these period? Fret not! Our SFX Intercessory Prayer Ministry will be standing in the gap to intercede and offer up your prayer petitions at their weekly prayer sessions. You may submit your prayer request to www.sfxchurch.sg/intercessory-prayer. You can rest assured that all prayer requests will be treated with the strictest confidence.

MASS OFFERINGS AVAILABLE VIA PAYNOW

Great news! We are now offering an online option for mass offerings. Please submit your intention 1 WEEK in advance. The Parish Office will contact you to provide you with a "Reference No", MO xxx (eg MO 001). Please indicate this referral number upon making payment via PayNow (**T08CC4033J**). These will be offered up during our priests' private masses. You may submit your mass offering via <https://tinyurl.com/SFXMassOffering>.

ONE: RISE ABOVE - AN ONLINE FAITH FORMATION SERIES

Join ONE's online Catholic Faith Formation series 'Rise Above'. A four-part study is designed to provide you with insights and inspiration on how we can draw on our faith to see through the challenges brought by the Covid-19 outbreak. Study session will take place **every Thursday at 8pm** starting on **Thu 16 Apr** over four Thursdays. Sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/riseabovestudy>.



School of Witness 2020: Drink Deeply, Live Fully



Micaela (far right) with her sowers.

"God Delights in Me" *Micaela Arriola, 23*

Coming into the School of Witness (SOW), I felt excited. I had left the church in 2014, and by God's grace I began my journey home in 2018. Being from a family of five, with two much older brothers, I felt that what "baby Micaela" had to say never held much weight, so I never said much. I felt small and was afraid of saying the wrong things, fearful that people wouldn't like me. I was a people-pleaser, so I would say and do whatever I thought others wanted or expected of me; I also rarely shared my feelings and opinions.

During the School of Christian Leadership (SOCL), I remembered an incident at a relative's house when I was six years old. I was clueless then, but I came to realise that something terrible had happened because of the adults' reaction. When my parents picked me up, they only said "that's not something you should do".

I felt that I had done something wrong and that something was taken away from me that day. My parents seemingly swept it under the rug – maybe they thought I was too young, that I didn't need to know or that I wouldn't remember. I longed for someone to talk to me but no one did. It made me feel insignificant and unimportant. I began to shrink myself in everything I did and tried not to get in anyone's way. I could never name the smallness I felt – but I now know it was shame.

I struggled to face this memory during SOW and my favourite excuse was that God will heal me in His time, which I decided wasn't now. In a session, we were asked what we wanted to surrender to Jesus. I wanted to surrender my shame but I struggled because I didn't want my feelings of disgust and dirtiness to be real. That night, I was afraid of facing Jesus. I kept thinking, 'I cannot', but following some good advice, instead I said, 'Lord, because of you I can'. When the Blessed Sacrament was brought to me, I saw the image of the mess and dirtiness in my heart and I was disgusted. But then, I saw him in the middle of that mess and dirtiness in my heart, and He told me that there was exactly where He wanted to be. He knew my pain and He still stayed.

Even after experiencing him so powerfully, I was still scared when my cell group leader (CGL) invited me to find Jesus in that incident. But I clung to the hope He planted in me; He made me

brave. In prayer, I could see him waiting to console me when no one else did. In my shame and unworthiness, he embraced and told me that he was proud of me and delighted in me. My CGL saw Jesus washing me clean with a bubble bath, and handing me a new white dress. As she shared, I felt Jesus anchoring himself in me. As the anchor sank, my shame was displaced. He restored my dignity and showed me that he knew me, loved me, and took care of me. He has freed me from my shame and self-reliance, and revealed to me who He made me to be – lovable, precious and absolutely worthy. Jesus tells me that my voice is important and that I don't have to hide anymore. Through him, I'm able to claim the truth that nothing I do could ever separate me from his love.

It is an everyday struggle and the evil one also knows exactly where to poke. He continuously tries to steal away my dignity and confidence. But Psalm 27:3 says, "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident." God reminds me that it is not about being shaken, but when I am, to be confident in the Lord. I am not too broken and I am not too small. He restores me.

Our God is a god that dares to step into our darkness, one who goes to all lengths. Just as Jesus knows me, he knows you. Will you allow him to show you who he made you to be? Come out of hiding, you're safe here with him.



With the continual barrage of bad news that keeps hitting us through what we see and read, sometimes it helps to consciously make a decision to choose the voices we want to listen to. For many of us, humour also helps to lift one's mood and give us a different perspective of life. This week, we would like to introduce Tomics Comics, a light-hearted way of looking and even reflecting on our faith. As the creator, Tom Gould, says in introducing his art, it's "family friendly fun for the faithful and faithless alike". So if you need some good humour do check out his work which is available in most major social media sites. So to quote our Archbishop, "smile" and we shall get through this together.

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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.



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

Closed until further notice

ADORATION ROOM

Closed until further notice

LIBRARY

Closed until further notice

COLUMBARIUM

Closed until further notice

CANTEEN

Closed until further notice

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