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Disciples Making Disciples

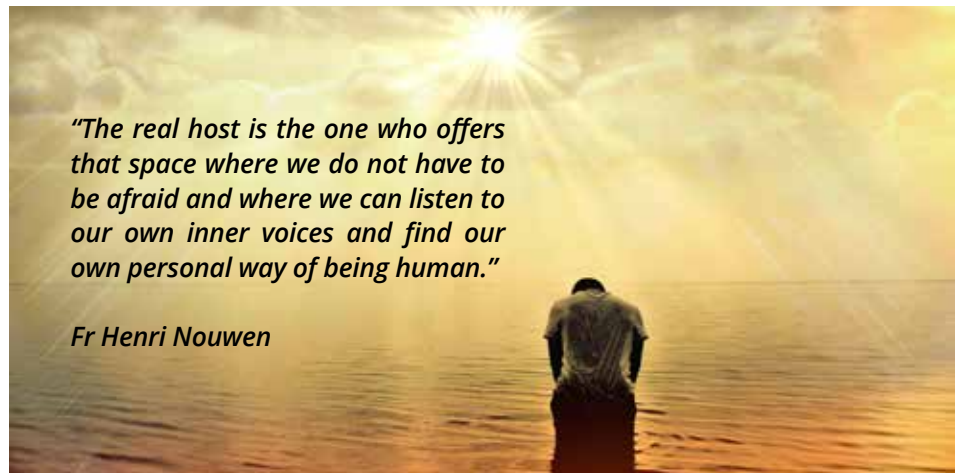
Jesus Cares Much To Prepare Our Eternal Home For Us

5th Sunday of Easter
10 May 2020

Ac 6:1-7
1 Pt 2:4-9
Jn 14:1-12

In today's Gospel, Jesus prepares his disciples for his departure by sharing with them that he will go to the Father and prepare a place for them in his Father's house (Jn 14:2). He promised not to leave them as orphans by sending them an advocate and asked them not to be fearful and troubled (Jn 14:1, 26-27). From Jn 14 to Jn 17, biblical scholars have classified these chapters as the Farewell Discourse by Jesus to his disciples immediately after the Last Supper in Jerusalem.

While Jesus was on earth, he spent much time with his disciples, teaching, guiding and forming them. Jesus' words about leaving must have surprised them. We can perhaps relate to the disciples' response when our children travel overseas to study, move out of the family or when a loved one passes away. There remains only a deep sense of emptiness, void and even abandonment. The disciples may have had a fleeting experience of being "abandoned" by Jesus when they encountered a storm while crossing over the other side of the sea, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mk 4:38) – but Jesus' words in the Farewell Discourse troubled them so deeply that Jesus had to assure them repeatedly of his continued care and presence.



"The real host is the one who offers that space where we do not have to be afraid and where we can listen to our own inner voices and find our own personal way of being human."

Fr Henri Nouwen

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only been a public health issue. The global economy has been very badly affected as well, many have lost their jobs, incomes have been slashed, and businesses have been disrupted. Feelings of insecurity and uncertainty abound and these pressures can make us react with bitterness, resentment, and even hatred. Far from being inspired by the faith, we may feel abandoned by God. We may have become cynical about so much suffering that feelings of deep disillusionment colour our capacity to relate with the One we once accepted and tried to follow. We feel ambivalent and dissatisfied, wondering if God can really be trusted and if God really is a personal God who is "close to the broken hearted." This is more so when our prayers for an end to this global pandemic seem to remain unanswered. Has God abandoned us, leaving us as orphans and we wonder, "Does God really care?"

Jesus assures us in today's gospel that God cares deeply. In Jn 14:2-3, Jesus tells his disciples that he had to leave in order to prepare a place for them (and us). He calls us to trust in the Father and also in him. We know that Jesus will come back and take

us to himself so that where he now is, we may also be. Certainly, there is no other image more reassuring than home, in fact, it is there that Jesus awaits us: "There are many rooms in my Father's house... I shall return to take you with me" (Jn 14:2-3).

Fr Henri Nouwen once shared, "when we think back to the places where we felt most at home, we quickly see that it was where our hosts gave us the precious freedom to come and go on our own terms and did not claim us for their own needs. Only in a free space can re-creation take place and new life be found. The real host is the one who offers that space where we do not have to be afraid and where we can listen to our own inner voices and find our own personal way of being human. But to be such a host we have to first of all be at home in our own house." (*Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*) In the final analysis, let us remain hopeful even in the midst of our pains and sufferings - because we have the Church and so are already in God's house, let us trust that God has a greater vision and plan for our lives.

Announcements

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

TEMPORARY ONLINE MASS OFFERINGS

During this period of the "Circuit Breaker", we will continue to accept mass offerings (for souls, God's blessings, special intentions etc.) online. Mass offering contributions are via PayNow only. **Please submit your intention one WEEK in advance.** The Finance Department will contact you and provide you with a "Reference No", MO xxx (eg MO 001). Please indicate the reference number upon making payment via PayNow (**T08CC4033J**). These mass offerings will be offered up during our priests' private masses. You may submit your mass offering via <https://tinyurl.com/SFXMassOffering>.

ONLINE ROSARY PRAYER

Come join our priests Fr Ben and Fr Vinu as we pray the rosary together online via Zoom. This online rosary prayer will be held on weekdays from **Mon 11 May - Fri 29 May at 3pm** - we encourage you to log in by 2.45pm. Please note that recording of the prayer session is not allowed.

Details of Zoom meeting:

Meeting ID: 845-8298-0708

Password: 621310

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

Rest assured that all prayer requests will be treated with the strictest confidence.



MOTHER'S DAY PRAYER



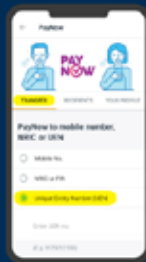
All loving God, we give you thanks and praise for mothers young and old. We pray for young mothers who give life and tend to our every need; May they be blessed with patience and tenderness to care for their families and themselves with great joy. We pray for our own mothers who have nurtured and cared for us; May they continue to guide us in their strong and gentle ways. We remember mothers who are separated from their children; May they feel the loving embrace of God who wipes every tear away. We pray for women who are not mothers but still love and shape us with motherly care and compassion. We remember mothers, godmothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers who are no longer with us but who live forever in our memory and nourish us with their love.

Amen.

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**

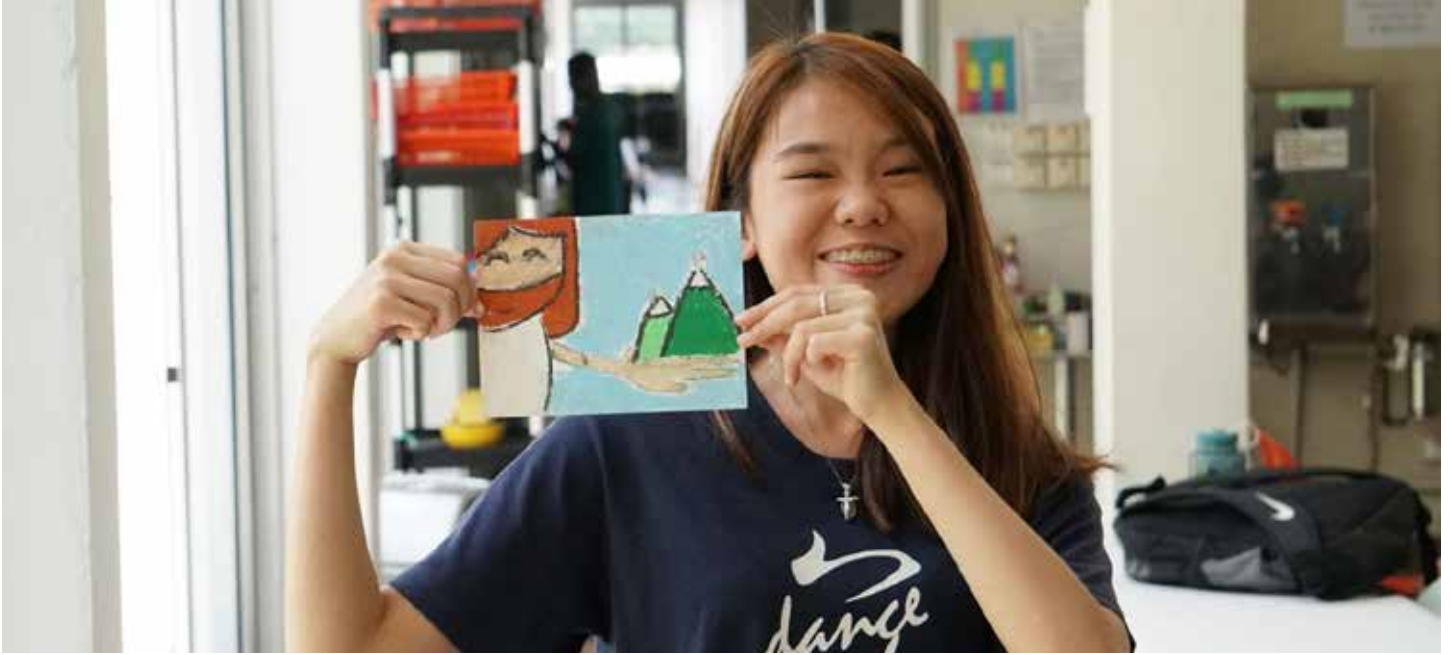
For more information, visit www.catholic.sg/offertory/
Step-by-step guide: www.catholic.sg/transfer-funds-via-paynow/

JESUS FOR EVERYONE

For next few weeks, some of us may have opportunities that we do not usually have, to spend quality time with people close to us, including Jesus! **Consider setting some time aside each day to read the Word of God, to draw strength, hope and wisdom from him. And share Jesus in your conversations with others. Tell others about Jesus.**

“God triumphs over every darkness”

– Vinnie Lim, 19



I was brought up in a traditional Asian family, where naturally, I was expected to perform well in school so as to secure a good future. Whenever I did so, my parents would be proud of me, and whenever I fell short of expectations, I would be scolded harshly. I drew the conclusion that being good and valuable means being excellent in everything. At the same time, unknowingly, this anxiety and fear of being worthless became my way of life.

I worked hard and expected nothing less than perfection for myself, and that gradually became the identity that I carried throughout my life. Little did anyone know that within me, there was an inner child constantly being beaten, scolded and called names. Even as the cutting narratives from my family ceased over the years, it carried on within me. I took over the necessary punishments because I believed my inner child deserved it, and that was the only way she could have a good future and be a good person.

I never knew how warped this constant chase for perfection was until a conversation with someone revealed something I never thought I would say – “I don’t need to be happy, so long as I can achieve in life.”

At the School of Witness, Jesus revealed to me my unhealthy need for control and perfection as well as my sinful self-condemnation that greatly crippled me in all that I did. It was painful to look back on all the memories that contributed to this identity I had claimed for myself, only to find a young child, with scars everywhere and tears in her eyes, huddled under all the debris. From there, Jesus brought me closer to her, and my heart shattered as I saw how she cowered and moved deeper into the corner. She was terrified of me, as I was her greatest abuser this whole time yet

I did not know what a monster I had been to her. All I could say to her from afar was, “I am sorry, I could not protect you, and I don’t know how to.”

While I knew it was limiting the life that I had, I was comfortable in the darkness I was in. I tried on my own to reconcile my head and my heart, but to no avail. Finally, I said, “Father Lord, here is the identity I have been holding onto so tightly for 19 years of my life. I am afraid that if I give this up to you, I will have nothing left and I will no longer be remembered or loved by the world out there. But I know you say otherwise, and you ask me to leave my nets behind to follow you. And so, by sheer obedience I will, as difficult as it is to unlearn and take on this new life you have called me to.”

In that instant, Jesus held the hands of both my inner child and I, and he brought us out of the dark dilapidated house we had been trapped in all this while. At the same time, he broke the unstable legs that I had, and gave me new ones. He then commanded me to learn how to walk with him in a new way. Jesus reminded me that even if I fell over and over again with these new pair of legs, as a father teaches and holds the hands of a toddler, so will he do the same for me too.

Every day of my life from here on, I want to claim the truth that I am now concretely a child of God, and not merely a “smart student” or a “good dancer”. I no longer wish to seek the limited sense of perfection in myself, but in Christ where there is true freedom. He calls me to use the gifts he has bestowed upon me in service of others, and to leave behind my self-obsessed life. And as a fellow brother of mine once said, “I no longer need to look for love everywhere else, because Love has already found me.”

Supporting our Friends-in-Need

The SSVP Conferences at the 29 parishes in Singapore provide not only financial aid but also spiritual and moral support to their Friends-in-Need (FINs). They also work actively with their fellow parishioners and parish ministries for the benefit of the larger parish community. Here is a story on how our parishioner has helped to make a difference:



Joanne baking some cookies

You need not be a Vincentian to bring hope to the poor...

Several volunteers work with Vincentians to make a difference in the lives of FINs. One of them is Cynthia Chew who works with Vincentians of the St Francis Xavier Conference when opportunities arise.

In 2018, she met Joanne Lio and her two daughters who were FINs of the Society. Joanne's husband Esmond was then suffering from stage 4 cancer. The family was struggling and was being helped by SSVP.

Joanne had attended a baking course and decided to try and earn a living through this avenue. Cynthia helped her to 'market' baked goods through Facebook. Her posts went viral and Joanne was featured on radio shows and the print media. She was overwhelmed with orders. But baking was taking a toll on Joanne's health so Cynthia further helped them raise funds through an online platform.

Joanne and Esmond were touched by the love and the blessings being showered on them and decided as a family to find out more about the Catholic faith.

Unfortunately Esmond's condition worsened and he passed on in August 2019. Cynthia and SSVP members continue to visit the family and provide support.

During this Covid-19 Circuit Breaker, people like Joanne are even more hard hit. She is unable to sell homemade cookies and charity funds are limited. If you would like to help raise funds for Joanne, please contact Cynthia at 9784 4794. Please do offer your generous support so that SSVP 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.



Looking for more Information?
visit 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

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