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**Disciples  
Making Disciples**

 **Parish Priest:**  
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**Priest in Residence:**  
Rev Fr Antony Maria Joseph

## The Meritocracy of God

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
20 Sep 2020

Is 55:6-9  
Phil 1:20c-24, 27a  
Mt 20:1-16a

The gospel narrative today may unsettle us quite profoundly if we, like the early-labourers in the parable, employ a secular heuristic to judge equity, justice, and merit. In a society so permeated by the idea of hard work, equity, and merit, the seemingly unmerited wage of the late-coming labourers contradicts the very ideals we hold dear. Understandably, if we were in a similar position as the early-labourers, many of us would have cried foul at the landowner's "unfair" wage practices – imagine working an entire day for the same wage another earns for working just a fraction of that amount!

The dissonance this parable engenders thus invites us to reflect more deeply on the *meritocracy of God* and challenges us to reevaluate our understanding of the economy of salvation. Does the landowner's action seem unfair because we hold an incorrect view of merit and fairness?

A common exegesis of this parable concerns *God's Love* for us and the impossibility of quantifying his *infinite love*. God, represented by the landowner, invites us, the "labourers", to be present in his vineyard – his Church. The wage thus represents the graces we in turn receive from being in God's vineyard. Privileged to see, experience, and indeed reap the benefits of God's love as his adopted children, we should not be envious when new "labourers" join our ranks. We should instead rejoice



*"For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."*  
Psalm 84:10

when we see these neophytes reaping the same graces which flow from the infinite love of God.

Just as a loving mother would not quantify her love for her child base on his worldly success and merits, we as children of God should not enumerate nor compare the love of God for our fellow brethren. When we see others being baptised into the faith, do we scorn at their conversion or do we rejoice at their rebirth? Certainly, we should exult, for these individuals are no longer standing idle in the marketplace of the world seeking food that would see them grow hungry again. Instead, they, like us, now have the privilege of being in the vineyard of the God who is the author of salvation; he who has personally called each one of us to be close to him; to dwell in his abode, to work in his vineyard – The Church!

Moreover, the unwarranted jealousy of the early-labourers also calls to mind the jealousy and anger experienced by the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. In response the father had said, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (Lk 15:31), reminding him that he had always been fortunate for he had always been in the abode of his father while his younger brother was not as fortunate. Reflecting on this, we

should therefore ask ourselves if we expect, even subconsciously, some form of reward for our faith thus falling into the sins of jealousy and spiritual pride (*St Teresa of Avila, The Way of Perfection*).

If we think that our service to the Church as a member of a community/ministry or even our attendance at mass merits some greater reward vis-à-vis non-Catholics and those less active in Church, then like the early labourers we have failed to see that our very presence in the vineyard, our labours for him and proximity to his true presence in the Eucharist are in themselves a reward beyond measure. This fact must therefore not lead us into ungratefulness nor taint our zeal for God; having been so fortunate to have been called out to be in his vineyard and to reap the fruits of it. These are the merits of God, the merits of his infinite love for us! Love without the expectation of reward is thus the currency in the economy of salvation, a "meritocracy" where love freely flows from the infinite heart of God (cf Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, 21 Sept 2008).

As the psalmist says: "*For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.*" (Ps 84:10)

## Announcements

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

### BOOKING OF MASSES IN OCTOBER

Bookings for October Masses begin next **Tue 22 Sep from 12pm on MyCatholic.sg**. For the first booking on 22nd Sep, the one weekend one Mass rule prevails.

**Two-weekend booking** will only commence on **Tue 13 Oct at 9am**, you will have the opportunity to book a second weekend Mass for October, subject to availability.

Weekday Masses continue to be unlimited across the month, on a one Mass one day basis. Please be gracious and make your booking at least 2 days in advance if you are sure you can attend.

**Tuesday, Thursday: 6.30pm**

**Saturday: 5.30pm**

**Sunday: 9am, 11am, 1pm, 5.30pm**

### THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

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

### INTERCESSORY PRAYER MINISTRY

Come storm heaven with us in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on **Fri 25 Sep, 8pm**. All are welcome to join via <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86151257252>

#### ZOOM MEETING DETAILS

Meeting ID: 861 5125 7252

Password: SFXIP25SEP



If you are joining us for the first time, please email [intercessory@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:intercessory@sfxchurch.sg) for pointers for the session.

### SFX CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer Meeting via Zoom is on **Mon 21 Sep, 8pm**. There will be praise and worship followed by a talk on *"What Must I Do To Gain Eternal Life? - Part 1"* by Fr Joseph Nathan, OFM. All are welcome.

#### ZOOM MEETING DETAILS

Meeting ID: 869 3102 2118

Password: CPGMON2109



### HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

Our SFX Intercessory Prayer Ministry will intercede and offer your prayer petitions at their weekly prayer sessions. Please submit your prayer request to [www.sfxchurch.sg/intercessory-prayer](http://www.sfxchurch.sg/intercessory-prayer). Rest assured that all prayer requests are kept confidential.

### ONLINE BOOKING OF COLUMBARIUM VISITS

All visitors to SFX columbarium are required to book a visitation timeslot online via <https://tinyurl.com/SFXColumbarium>.



SCAN TO BOOK

1. This will be on a first-come, first-served basis. All visitors are to fill in their name, NRIC (last three digits and alphabet) and contact number.
2. Do make your online booking one day in advance.
3. **There will be no booking on Public Holidays and Sundays.** The visiting period is from **Mon to Sat: 10am - 12 noon, 2pm - 4pm.**
4. **A maximum of 5 people are allowed per slot.** All visitors are required to wear a mask, check in with SafeEntry for contact tracing and register at the Parish Office for temperature screening.
5. Each visit is for a duration of **20 minutes** (e.g. enter at 10am and exit by 10.20am, next available timeslot will be from 10.30am - 10.50am, etc. If visitors are late for their booked time, no additional time can be accorded).
6. If the group is early, please wait either at the bench in front of JP11 Hall or seats located outside the Parish Office. Please be mindful to keep a one-metre distance apart from other groups.

### MASS COLLECTION

Mass collections can be made via:

1. **PayNow** - Launch Paynow service on your bank's app or online website. Select **"Send via Unique Entity Number (UEN)"** and enter **"T08CC4033J"**. Proceed to check entity Name - **Church of St Francis Xavier**, then key in Amount. Lastly, key in Ref - **Mass Collection**.

1. **Cheque** - Payable to **Church of St Francis Xavier**. Mail cheques to **63A Chartwell Drive, Singapore 558758**.

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

### VERBUM DEI: A JOURNEY FROM FEAR TO FAITH (ONLINE RETREAT)

This scripture-based retreat is for all young adults who yearn to encounter God and grow in faith in these uncertain times. Each Saturday session includes an input by a Verbum Dei Missionary/Disciple, time for private reflection on the Word of God as well as small group faith sharing. Participants are strongly encouraged to commit to all 4 sessions of the retreat.

**Date:** 10,17, 24, 31 Oct 2020 (Saturdays)

**Time:** 10.30am - 12PM

**Cost:** \$10

Register: <https://verbumdeisingapore.org/forms/a-journey-from-fear-to-faith>

### TEMPORARY ONLINE MASS OFFERINGS

**Please submit your intention 1 WEEK in advance and wait for the Finance Department to contact you. They will provide you with a "Reference No", MO xxx (eg MO 001). Key in the given referral number upon making payment via PayNow (T08CC4033J). Your intentions will be offered up during our priests' private masses.**

# L10 Confirmation: Sealed by the Holy Spirit

Another 30 teens were confirmed, anointed with chrism oil and sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit on Sat 12 Sep. As Fr Ben prayed these words over them and asked the Holy Spirit to “give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; (and to) fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord”, all were reminded that though there may be a variety of gifts, there is always the same Spirit, working in us for one purpose - to spread the good news to others.

In his homily, Fr Ben reminded the teens that this day was not a “graduation” or a time to “flee” from church. On the contrary, it marks the next stage of the journey. Together with the church community and using the bible as a “map”, he urged all present to continue to pray and always place Jesus in the centre of their lives. God may speak to us in many ways and if we listen to him in our hearts, he will guide us through this journey of life.

*Do continue to keep our youths in prayer as they sit for their exams and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit that have been poured onto them.*

*If you would like to send them a note of support and/or encouragement, you may do so on our parish Facebook and Instagram account, or drop them an email at [mmm@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg).*



"Until recently, I was struggling to find the importance and significance of Confirmation and always thought that whether I had catechism or not, my faith would still live on. But life has proven otherwise many times. And my faith has been put to the test very often. However, God has been guiding me in my faith journey for the past few months and I have come to realise that he has been guiding me through life over and over again. Affirming me that he is right by my side in every step I take in life, quelling my doubts and worries.

Being confirmed, we now have full control of our faith and as we progress in our faith journey, I hope that all of us will continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit and live our lives as faithful members of the Catholic community."

- Michael Ryan Tan

"The journey towards receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation was exciting but tough. With the pandemic and subsequent circuit breaker measures, it was a pity that we had to delay this process but I'm grateful to have been given more time to prepare myself for it. I feel very blessed to have been given such devoted catechists who did their best to ensure receiving this sacrament became a reality for us.



I thank God especially for loving me through those he has placed in my life and for receiving my love for him and the commitment I have made to him. I will always remember and hold close in my heart this very special Rite of Confirmation."

- Leah Michelle Nerva



"As a lapsed Catholic up till Secondary 1, I wasn't really sure how my faith would turn out. It was scary and lonely to head for Mass sometimes too. However, with the guidance of my catechists, I persevered and now I feel that my faith is stronger. The smell of chrism oil is unforgettable and the Sacrament of Confirmation is something I hold dearly in my heart. I have started to pray the rosary daily and tried to reduce my cynical attitude towards proclaiming God openly, because I feel that someone of this significance is more important than my human attitude."

- Gabriel Valentine Fong



Looking for more Information?  
visit [www.sfxchurch.sg](http://www.sfxchurch.sg)



"The journey to Confirmation was filled with many ups and downs but it was an extremely fruitful one. I have been blessed with passionate catechists throughout the many years of catechism, a supportive community in church and my peers who have walked this path with me. With the current

pandemic, Confirmation was postponed and many church activities were carried out online. That might have been one of the biggest challenges for me, to commit to attending Friday bible sharing and attending online Mass. But it was also a timely test of my faith before getting confirmed.

I am thankful to be given the opportunity to read the second reading at Mass - a reading from 1 Corinthians about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was a great reminder of the power of the Holy Spirit and how God has given me all these gifts to continue my Christian journey. I pray especially for the gift of understanding to help me grow and deepen my faith."

- Sarah Elizabeth Chua

"My journey to Confirmation was a rocky one. In my childhood, I did all the 'compulsory' things automatically that a Catholic would do, like attend Sunday Mass and catechism sessions. However, during Sec 2, I felt a stirring in me to dive deeper into the heart of Jesus, to leave what I was comfortable with and to live for Jesus. It was not a sudden explosion of love but it was more like a long journey in which I was not always the most faithful disciple, in which I was fearful and did not always have faith in God. I tried to cut corners in my faith and consequently hurt myself and those around me in the process. Yet God is always faithful and always there for me when I needed him, slowly helping me, guiding me and shaping me to be who he wants me to be.



Confirmation is the start of a new chapter of my journey with Christ and I still have a long way to go to reach the greatness that God desires of me. But I know he is always with me and he is lovingly waiting for me with his many gifts and blessings."

- Francis Augustine Wong

"I remember when I first attended catechism, I had no idea who God was and was definitely not keen on attending. Fast forward 10 years later, I am so grateful that I have been able to know more about God and his undying love for me. I will definitely miss all those lessons.



If there is one thing that I learned during my Confirmation journey, it is that I am never alone in life, for the Lord will always be with me. Without Him, I wouldn't be the person I am today and I am thankful that I have been able to learn more about Him, especially through His words."

- Ashley Ann Lim

### Mass Timings

#### WEEKDAY MASSES

**Tue & Thur:**  
6.30pm

#### WEEKEND MASSES

**Sat Sunset:**  
5.30pm

*(There is currently no Novena at 4.45pm)*

**Sun:** 9am, 11am, 1pm, 5.30pm  
*(There is currently no Confession before Mass)*

#### MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Suspended until further notice

#### HOLY HOUR

Suspended until further notice

### Opening Hours

#### PARISH OFFICE

For pastoral care services (e.g anointing, funerals etc), you may contact before coming at the following hours.

**Mon - Sat:**  
9.30am - 6.30pm  
**Sun:** 8.30am - 2pm

#### ADORATION ROOM

Closed until further notice

#### LIBRARY

Closed until further notice

#### COLUMBARIUM

<https://tinyurl.com/SFXColumbarium>  
*(by appointment only)*

### 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)