



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Your House And Your Kingdom Shall Endure Forever

4th Sunday of Advent
20 Dec 2020

2 Sm 7: 1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16
Rom 16: 25-27
Lk 1: 26-38

In this week's Gospel, Luke tells of the story of the annunciation. The Advent reflection moves from longing and preparation, to Jesus' identity and how he is to come into our world – the entering into our humanity.

The First Reading from 2 Samuel is a foretelling of the coming of Christ. The Lord through the prophet Nathan tells King David that he intends to give him an heir, to not allow his descendants or his kingdom to be overcome. "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever." (2 Sam 7:16) The Lord God also says "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me."

As the angel Gabriel similarly announces in the gospel, this is the son whom Mary will bear, who will be given the throne of David, who will rule over the house of Jacob, and his kingdom will have no end. With such a grand revelation, it is no wonder Mary is initially taken aback.

Yet, Mary's response draws us to contemplate the fine balance needed between actively cooperating and passively accepting. Mary initially asks "how can this be", perhaps wondering what has she done or what else does she need to do for this to happen. Upon hearing the angel's explanation, Mary's subsequent reply "may it be done to



How do we enshrine the image and likeness of God inside our body, our intellect, our affectivity, our actions? What kind of church or cathedral is our very person?

me according to your word" reveals a humble submission to God's plans.

In his Angelus address given on 10 December 2006, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI says, "Therefore, though it is God who takes the initiative of coming to dwell in the midst of men, and He is always the main architect of this plan, it is also true that He does not will to carry it out without our active cooperation. Therefore, [we are] to commit [ourselves] to build 'God's dwelling with men.' No one is excluded; everyone can and must contribute so that this house of communion will be more spacious and beautiful."

It is here that we should ponder: What does it mean to build God's dwelling? What does this house of communion look like?

Fr Ronald Rolheiser shares on his blog his reflections on Isaiah 66:1 – "What kind of house can you build for me?" This echoes our First Reading in which God asks "Should you build me a house to dwell in?" Like King David intended, people of all ages have constructed literal buildings and places of worship. However, just as Jesus grows within the womb of Mary, he wants to dwell and deepen his communion within

us. We are meant to be his home and his dwelling place. Fr Rolheiser puts these questions to us: "How do we enshrine the image and likeness of God inside our body, our intellect, our affectivity, our actions? What kind of *church* or *cathedral* is our very person?"

The gospel tells us of how Jesus "by the power of the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary." If we partake of an incarnational spirituality, we can make Jesus present to those around us, through our body, our intellect, our affectivity, and our actions. Like Mary, who is the new ark of the covenant, we become the dwelling place where Jesus can call home.

The establishment of God's house and his kingdom is not a far off event lost in historicity. Neither must we wait until the end of time when the Lord will reign absolutely. It is a process which can happen in our day to day lives. If we only ponder, what else can I do to cooperate with God's divine will, and to willingly submit to everything that comes our way, all the while keeping our gaze solely on our Lord like Mary did.

Announcements

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



SFX CHRISTMAS VIGIL ONLINE WEBCAST

Great News! We will be streaming our midnight Mass live on our YouTube channel on **Thu 24 Dec, 12 midnight**. Join us as a parish community to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord. **Keep connected with us on social media for the latest updates!**



Scan the QR Code to join us and check out the special Christmas greeting from our beloved priests too!

PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

Please note that the Parish Office will be closed at the following times:

Thu 24 Dec, 31 Dec - Open till 12pm
Fri 25 Dec, 1 Jan - Closed

GIFT PROGRAMME

This weekend, **19/20 Dec**, being the third weekend of the month, there will be a call for contributions for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) programme to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church. Please give generously to support the organisations and projects of the archdiocese by making a monthly giving pledge. You can give via PayNow (**UEN: 201231391K**) or drop your contributions into the GIFT donation box at the two entrances of the Main Church. More info at catholicfoundation.sg

TEMPORARY ONLINE MASS OFFERINGS

Please submit your intentions **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**).

MASS COLLECTION

Your continuous generosity and donations will help contribute to our Parish's daily operations. You can make your offerings via the following options:

- 1. PayNow** - Launch the 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 the reference - **Mass Collection**.
- 2. Cheque** - Payable to **Church of St Francis Xavier** and write 'Mass Collection' behind the cheque. Mail cheques to **63A Chartwell Drive, Singapore 558758**.

INTERCESSORY NOTICE

There will be no intercessory prayer on **Fri 25 Dec**. You may submit your prayer request to www.sfxchurch.sg/intercessory-prayer. All prayer requests are kept confidential.

SFX Christmas Project 2020

Christmas gives us the perfect opportunity to restore broken lives and spirits, and bring hope and love to all. Let us Rise Up & Reach Out, and live out our Parish mission of Disciples making Disciples. Together as a Parish community, let us herald the Good News, and bring Christ - the Light of the World - to all!

You would have received a package which contains a Christmas Portrait template, an Outreach Card and Prayer Tags.

CHRISTMAS PORTRAIT

Consecrate your family to God this new liturgical year! Take a family portrait in front of your family altar, paste it onto the template provided and fill out a message of thanksgiving. Drop the template in the designated box located outside the Parish Office by **Sun 20 Dec**. All portraits received will be displayed around the Church and consecrated on the Feast Day of Holy Family. Alternatively, you may submit them digitally via tinyurl.com/SFXmasPortrait



CHRISTMAS OUTREACH CARD

Send this greeting card to a non-Christian or welcome a fellow brother/sister-in-Christ back to Church with this Christmas greeting.

ADVENT PRAYER TREES

What better gift for Christmas than the gift of prayer for a loved one or friend in need?

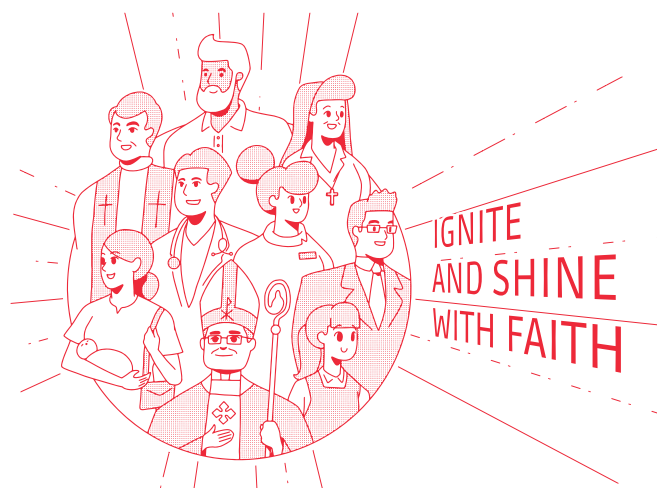


Write your personal petition/thanksgiving and also let the Holy Spirit guide you in praying intentionally for someone this Advent! Write their name(s) on the prayer tag and drop them in the designated box located outside the Parish Office before Christmas. As a community of faith, we will pray for all these intentions throughout Advent.



Church of St Francis Xavier

Celebrates the 200th Anniversary
of the Catholic Church in Singapore



"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!" Luke 12:49

2021: THE YEAR TO IGNITE AND SHINE WITH FAITH

Two hundred years ago, on 11 December 1821, St Laurent Imbert landed in Singapore. From then, missionaries from faraway lands came and planted the seeds of faith. Thereafter, the growing local Church has seen the ebb and flow of history, which shaped modern Singapore. From 13 December 2020, our Archdiocese will mark this pivotal year to launch a new era of faith. For more info, visit www.catholic200.sg.



Every Catholic is invited to renew our faith:

DEEPEN 1

Take part in the following:

- Penitential services
- Works of charity and mercy
- Intercessory prayer sessions
- Official Prayer • Penance • Novenas
- Prayer marathon • Catechetical talks

2 DISCERN

Participate in group discernment exercises on the role of our faith:

- Families • Parish life
- Society • Serving the poor and marginalised

CELEBRATE 4

Come together as one Church for:

- Concurrent Mass • Plenary Indulgence
- Mission rallies • Catholic200SG Festival

3 WITNESS

Participate in events that witness the faith in:

- Education • Healthcare • Workplace
- Social mission • Youth • Family life

Catholic200SG Prayer

Heavenly Father, Your Son commissioned His apostles to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Our founding missionaries left home and country so that we in Singapore may receive the Good News and Your loving salvation. Thank You for this gift of faith, and for all those who laboured to keep it alive and burning these two hundred years.

Lord Jesus, our faith is in danger of becoming irrelevant because of secularism, materialism, individualism and relativism. Grant our communities a renewed missionary zeal and courage to proclaim Your name and Lordship.

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, to renew Your people with the conviction and courage of our early missionaries. Rekindle our faith so that we can be beacons of light in a world darkened by sin, hopelessness, and ignorance. Protect us from the snares of the evil one and grant us the grace to remain faithful to You.



May our families be models of love and unity; our workplaces be sanctuaries for justice and integrity; truth and charity be taught in our classrooms; parishes live out their mission in communion; the poor, sick, and abandoned see the face of God in us, and may peace and harmony reign among peoples of every race, language and religion in our land.

Blessed Mother, you were the first disciple and evangeliser to announce Jesus as Saviour to the world. Intercede and grant us your maternal guidance and protection as we navigate the uncertain future.

Father, may Your love and grace ignite our hearts and lead us to launch a new era of faith, so that we may once again be a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

The Season of Advent:

Reflection by Fr Cornelius



"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." (Mt 5:9)

Just open the daily newspapers and you can have a glimpse of the turmoil in the world. How can Jesus be with us in this world when there is so much upheaval? Very often, we are looking for peace in the world, but it is more important for us to find this peace in our hearts. Only then, can we bring this peace to the world and the people around us.

Before Jesus was betrayed and arrested, He said to his disciples, "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." (Jn 14:27) Often after performing an act of healing, Jesus parted with these words, "Go in peace." (Mk 5:34; Lk 7:50; 8:48)

Sts Peter and Paul suffered much for the spread of the gospel. They were arrested, jailed and ill-treated, but they were definitely at peace, as they knew they were righteous with God. These words of Jesus definitely reassured them, "I have told you all these so that you may find peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but be brave: I have conquered the world." (Jn 16:33)

The Hebrew word for peace (shalom - שָׁלוֹם) does not simply mean the absence of war or turmoil but so much more: the fullness of life, abundant blessings, right relationships all round, especially with God. Shalom is a gift from God.

When I meet people who are disturbed because of relationships, work, etc, one of the things I will advise them to do is to spend quiet time in front of the Blessed Sacrament and attend the eucharistic celebrations as often as they can, even daily if possible.

Although the eucharistic adoration rooms are closed in this current Covid-19 situation, and we may not be able to spend quiet time before the physical presence of the risen Lord, eucharistic celebrations are still possible. It may be restrictive and troublesome for some of us to book the masses online, but what better way to be in the presence of the Lord, and even more, to receive him physically and sacramentally in Holy Communion.

Just before we receive Jesus in Holy Communion at mass, the priests give the greeting, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." He is wishing all of us the peace of Christ. He is wishing us every possible blessing from Jesus. And he continues to exhort us to "offer each other the sign of peace."

As we seek peace in our lives and in our hearts, remember to seek it in Jesus. His first words when he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection were "Peace be with you."

Let us not forget that we are also called to be peacemakers, bringing this divine peace to others. Then we shall be truly worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God, to be sons of God.



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg!

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 us before coming at the following hours.

Mon - Sat:

9.30am - 6.30pm
Sun: 8.30am - 1pm

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