



**Disciples
Making Disciples**



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The Freedom to be with God

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
31 Jan 2021

Dt 18: 15-20
1 Cor 7: 32-35
Mk 1: 21-28

At first glance, the three readings today might seem to have little relevance to our modern lives. The first, from Deuteronomy records Moses' message from God that a prophet would be chosen from among the Jews to speak in his name. The second from St Paul seems to be against marriage. The Gospel from Mark relates how Jesus drove out an unclean spirit from a man (in a time when many more people believed in the devil than is the case today). But, in fact, all three are highly relevant and give us insights into the truths of our faith.

Beginning with the Gospel, we are told how Jesus' teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum "astounded" his listeners, "for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." (Mk 1:22) They were even more astonished when Jesus also revealed his authority over unclean spirits, telling the spirit in a possessed man, "Be silent, and come out of him." (Mk 1: 25)

Mark's recounting of this encounter reminds us why God sent his only begotten son to live among us, so he could teach with authority the word of God, and also, with his divine power, drive out the evil that exists in men. The two are part of the same mission that are central to our Christian faith.

Sin and evil keep us away from doing God's will and we have to recognise and acknowledge their existence even when it is not obviously present in our daily lives. This passage from



What keeps us away from God isn't usually a pesky unclean spirit in us that needs to be exorcised but all the other things that we consider more important - our pursuit of material wealth, status and power and our insecurities and anxieties over these distractions.

CCC 386 explains this point: "Sin is present in human history; any attempt to ignore it or to give this dark reality other names would be futile. To try to understand what sin is, one must first recognise the profound relationship of man to God, for not only in this relationship is the evil of sin unmasked in its true identity as humanity's rejection of God and opposition to him, even as it continues to weigh heavy on human life and history."

In other words, we can understand sin only in the context of our relationship with God. The two are inseparable.

Jesus demonstrates his absolute sovereignty by driving away the evil spirit with his words, and shows us that we too can overcome sin when he is on our side. But it is not just outright evil that keeps us away from God, and the second reading makes this clear. St Paul's missive that "the unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord" but "the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife" is not anti-marriage. Marriage is a wonderful institution that is part of God's gift to us but it

should move us closer to him and not replace him. The important message is in the last line of the reading when he spoke about having "unhindered devotion to the Lord."

What keeps us away from God isn't usually a pesky unclean spirit in us that needs to be exorcised but all the other things that we consider more important - our pursuit of material wealth, status and power and our insecurities and anxieties over these distractions. The Lord recognised this and his victory over sin is precisely to free us and return us to our original relationship with God. He so wanted man to be free that he sacrificed his own life to achieve it.

As Christians, we have to ask ourselves what is it that we should do with this freedom. How can we put God front and centre of our lives and free ourselves from whatever keeps us away from him? What can we do to help continue the Lord's work and be his chosen prophets in these modern times, strengthened by the knowledge that with Jesus on our side, nothing can stand in the way? The three readings today help us answer these questions.

Announcements

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

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

It is available via appointment only. You can contact the Parish Office to make an appointment for the following time slots:

Tuesdays & Fridays: 4pm - 6pm
Saturdays: 10am - 12pm

BLESSING OF CANDLES (2 FEB)

There will be a blessing of candles on **Tue 2 Feb** for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Bring your candles and get them blessed.

RETURNING OF OLD PALMS

Do return your old palms to the boxes placed at the front foyer of Main Church by **31 Jan**. Please kindly remove all plastics bags and rubber bands.

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**).

HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

Our SFX Intercessory Prayer Ministry will intercede and offer your prayer petitions at its weekly prayer sessions. Please submit your prayer request to www.sfxchurch.sg/intercessory-prayer. All prayer requests are kept confidential.

Join us online **every Fri, 8pm** to pray and intercede for others in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. If you are joining us for the first time, please email intercessory@sfxchurch.sg for more information. All are welcome!

ZOOM MEETING DETAILS

Meeting ID:
861 5125 7252
Password:
SFX5FEB



CATHOLIC200SG
SINCE 1821

Church of St Francis Xavier
Celebrates the 200th Anniversary
of the Catholic Church in Singapore

February Mass Bookings

[HTTPS://MYCATHOLIC.SG](https://mycatholic.sg)

MARS Booking Schedule

TUE 2 FEB, 12PM

Booking for a 2nd weekend Mass. Weekday Mass booking are open throughout and subject to availability.

TUE 9 FEB, 12PM

Booking for a 3rd weekend Mass. Weekday Mass booking are open throughout and subject to availability.

TUE 16 FEB, 12PM

Booking for a 4th weekend Mass. Weekday Mass booking are open throughout and subject to availability.

Things to note:

- To enter our Church premises, check in must be done via the TraceTogether token or the mobile app.
- Entry is via the Main Church foyer or Plaza (outside JPPII Hall).
- Please come at least 20 minutes before Mass begins. Registration ends when Stations/Mass begins.
- Bring along your photo identification card for MARS booking verification.
- Do remember to cancel your booking 2 days in advance if you are unable to attend. A no-show for Masses that have been booked is being tracked in the system.

Lunar New Year Mass Schedule

There will be distribution and blessing of oranges for Masses from 11 Feb to 14 Feb; you may also bring your own oranges to be blessed.

THUR 11 FEB: 4PM

*No evening mass

FRI 12 FEB: 9AM, 11AM

*No evening mass



Mass Schedule during Lent

Please note that you are expected to attend both Stations and Mass TOGETHER; do not come for just one or the other. No late arrivals will be entertained once Stations have started.



Ash Wednesday

17 FEB: 6.30PM, 8.30PM

*Fasting and abstinence are to be observed.

Stations of the Cross & Mass

TUE & THU: 6.30PM

FRI: 8PM

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:

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

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer Meeting via Zoom is on **Mon 1 Feb, 8pm**. There will be praise and worship followed by Bible sharing facilitated by Andrew Toh. All are welcome.

ZOOM MEETING DETAILS

Meeting ID:
836 3543 9497
Password:
HOLYSPIRIT



CATHOLIC200SG: INTERCESSORY PRAYER

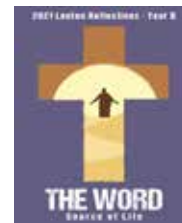
You are invited to join us at **8pm every Tuesday**. Intercede with us as we pray for the 200th anniversary of the Catholic Faith in Singapore, that God's love and grace may ignite our hearts and lead us to launch a new era of faith, so that once again we may be a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary church. Commencing Jan to end Nov 2021, every Tuesday, from 8pm to 9pm.



SCAN TO
REGISTER

ONE: LENT REFLECTION E-BOOKLET 2021

The Office for the New Evangelisation has produced a reflection e-booklet to journey with you throughout Lent. They are available in English, Chinese and Tamil. The reflection theme for this Lent is **"The Word, Source of Life"**. You may download the e-booklet at bit.ly/Lenten2021. Short weekly videos that complement the e-booklet will also be uploaded on **Thu 8pm**, starting **31 Jan** at tinyurl.com/oneyoutubechannel.



RCIA Retreat 2021 – Jesus is calling us to New Life

The Catechumens and Candidates who recently attended the RCIA retreat from 15 to 16 January 2021, were called to identify (and reclaim) their identity as children of God – one that had been stolen and lost to the world of false ideas.

During the non stay-in retreat, the participants were invited to reflect on their conversion journey and contemplate on what it means to have Jesus in their lives. Once we have encountered Jesus, our perspective on life will change. This was evident with many who experienced the healing grace of Jesus.

Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector was one. After his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus gave half of his possessions to the poor and even went further to say "if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." (Lk 19:1-10) This is the power of conversion. Another worthy of note is the woman who suffered hemorrhages for 12 years. No physician was able to help her. Yet she had faith: "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." (Mk 5:25-34) Faith can heal our brokenness and sin.

To prepare the participants for an encounter with Jesus, they were first introduced to praying the Divine Office followed by, reflections on the above two scriptures and small group sharings before meeting Jesus during the Eucharistic Adoration session. For some, the retreat was a good time to escape the bustle of everyday life, to spend time with Jesus. For others, it was a time to offer up their brokenness and hurts to the Lord, pray for healing and restoration, and for Jesus to bring them new life.



"The SFX RCIA retreat was a great experience for me as I was able to take some time away from routine, to reflect and reconnect with my spiritual beliefs. It allowed me to understand myself better and muse through my spiritual journey. Grateful for having my service team as they put in a lot of effort and hours to ensure that everything well smoothly."

- Aiswarya Devi

"At the start of the RCIA journey, we were asked to write a letter to Jesus and in it, I asked him the purpose of my existence. At the RCIA retreat, when I heard this being said, 'You are not a mistake. You are created, chosen and loved, and you have a mission', I wondered if God was speaking to me."

It was during this time that I went for a fertility test. For fear of being told I was infertile again, I said to God, 'I'm sorry, please forgive me!' To my utter surprise, he responded through the doctor's words: 'Congratulations! After all these years, you may now prepare for pregnancy!' God continued to speak to me especially at the retreat when a deep-seated scar started to surface. I knew then that God had wanted me to face my fear and pain. During adoration, I broke down in tears as Jesus revealed painful memories that were buried so deep and forgotten. 'Maybe she hasn't forgiven you either?' I didn't understand this question at the time. But I later found my answer through a fellow Catechumen's testimonial."

It was at the retreat that I also found the purpose of my life: to be a testimony of how great God is and how much he loves us. My faith has deepened since and I hope that everyone will also get to experience his great love for us."

- Jaslyn Law





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

"The retreat gave me a lot of time to really think about my journey with God. What I liked most was the sharing between our group members as well as testimonials from the participants. I could relate to what was being shared and it taught me not to judge so quickly but to always seek to understand why certain people behave in a certain way. God reveals himself to us in many ways that we often do not think of."

"During adoration, it was hard to keep my mind clear as many thoughts kept coming. Perhaps it was due to a stressful and tiring night before. Although I wasn't able to find peace for that one hour, I did enjoy my first adoration session and I look forward to connecting with the Lord more in the future."

- Keith Ho

"The sharings by the speaker and within our group were deeply personal - which allowed us to in turn to open up. The adoration session was emotional at times for me as I reaffirmed my commitment and asked him for strength to continue in my journey. It was a deeply personal experience and I look forward so very much to be able to do so with more reflection and readiness next time."

- Ansel Tan



World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

In 1997, Pope St John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on 2 February. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolising Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. Let us pray for all those who have made commitments to consecrated life, and thank them on this special day. May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

GO FORTH! Remember the beauty of your first call. Jesus continues to call you today with the same full love and untamed grace.

GO FORTH! There is always more to do, to encounter, to be grateful for, to be astonished by. Begin and end with the joy of prayer—the marrow of consecrated life.

GO FORTH! Each of us has a role to play in the Church. Witness and sow well each day, and look to tomorrow with hope.

GO FORTH! Grow in love for God so that others will be attracted by the divine light in you. Welcome the new vocations the Lord sends to continue the work of consecration.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of God and first disciple of her son, Jesus, our Lord. AMEN.

— POPE FRANCIS

Mass Timings

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tue & Thur:
6.30pm

Fri:
8pm
(During Lent only,
includes Stations)

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 - 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.

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