



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Gospel of the Outcast

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
11 Sep 2022

Ex 32:7-11, 13-14
1 Tim 1:12-17
Lk 15:1-32 (or 1-10)

This Sunday's gospel text begins a series of stories in Luke, which has traditionally been known as 'The Gospel of the Outcast'. For centuries, Luke 15 has been seen as God's invitation to those who have strayed away, but also to those who have stayed the path.

In this regard, the chapter opens with a description of "tax collectors and sinners" being near Jesus. For this group, the message of mercy in Jesus' stories is clear: the shepherd seeks out the lost sheep; the woman sweeps the house for the lost coin. God not only welcomes sinners, but he actively reaches out to them and invites them back into the fold.

In his book *"The Name of God is Mercy"*, Pope Francis thus emphasises the Church's critical role in demonstrating mercy: "The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. I often say that in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the churches and the parishes, to go outside and look for people, where they live, where they suffer, and where they hope. I like to use the image of a field hospital to describe this 'Church that goes forth'".

St Paul fortifies this message in our Second Reading: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... and if mercy has been shown to me,

it is because Jesus Christ meant to make me the greatest evidence of his inexhaustible patience for all the other people who would later have to trust in him to come to eternal life". The Lord's mercy is therefore not simply a psychological balm to those burdened by guilt and shame; it is salvific. Jesus not only seeks out and forgives sinners, he saves them.

But the Gospel of the Outcast is not just for the sinners; it is also for the 'righteous'. Indeed, in the same opening paragraph of this Sunday's text, we see Pharisees and scribes also listening – albeit while grumbling – to Jesus.

Jesus' message to this group is more subtle; as such messages to the proud and self-righteous must be. In Jesus' stories of the Gospel of the Outcast, everyone is called to celebrate. Both the shepherd who finds his lost sheep and the woman that finds her lost coin invite their friends and neighbours to "rejoice". Most tellingly, in the story of the Prodigal Son, the good father goes out to coax the elder son and invite him to join in the celebration.

In other words, both the sinners and the scribes, as well as the tax collectors and the Pharisees, are one people that should rejoice and celebrate together. The finding of a sinner should not imply the loss of a saint (or scribe).

For we are all God's people, a point illustrated in the First Reading. When God tells Moses that "your people whom you brought out of Egypt have apostatised", Moses responds by reminding God that these are "people of *yours* whom *you* brought out of the land of Egypt with arm outstretched and mighty hand" [emphasis added]. And God relented and forgave.

In the face of God's inexhaustible mercy, the line between the sinner and the righteous therefore blurs. Compared to God, none of us are worthy. Sinner or scribe, we are all outcasts – cast out of Eden – and we all need to hear the Gospel. For all of us are sinners, all of us need God, and all of us are God's people.

It is against this backdrop that we can understand what Pope Francis meant when he said: "Who am I to judge?"



"The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. I often say that in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the churches, and the parishes, to go outside and look for people, where they live, where they suffer and where they hope. I like to use the image of a field hospital to describe this 'Church that goes forth' ". — Pope Francis, The Name of God is Mercy

Announcements

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

**SCAN QR CODE
FOR MASS HYMNS**
www.sfxchurch.sg/mass



FAULTY/DAMAGED CHURCH PEWS?

Spot any faulty or damaged pews in church? Scan the QR Code to share with us at tinyurl.com/SFXFacilitiesReport



SSVP 2ND COLLECTIONS

With your kind donations last weekend, SSVP was able to raise **\$6,491.70** for our Friends-In-Need. We thank you for your generosity and continued support of their activities.

THE ALTAR SERVERS SOCIETY RECRUITMENT

All boys between the ages 8 to 12 are welcome. Training begins in the first week of October 2022 and will be held every Saturday or Sunday, more training sessions to be done during holidays. Timing will be further confirmed with parents.



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD
tinyurl.com/SFXALTARSERVERS2022

Please download, print and submit the completed form to the Parish Office by **16 September 2022**.

For any enquiries, please contact Mario (9850 8376)/ Brian Hofbauer (9129 5767) or email sfxaltarservers63@gmail.com

INTERCESSORY

Come storm heaven with us in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Date: Mon 12 Sep 2022
Time: 8pm - 9.30pm
Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Room

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer Meeting is on **Mon 12 Sep**. There will be Praise & Worship followed by Bible Sharing. All are welcome!

Time: 8pm - 10pm
Venue: SFX Parish Hall
(Parish Centre, Level 3)

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: TO LOVE, DIGNIFY, SERVE AND LEAD

This year, the Archdiocese celebrates 170 years of Catholic Education in Singapore. Catholic Education Sunday is on the weekend of 10th & 11th September. The theme of the celebration is "Catholic Education: To Love, Dignify, Serve and Lead". This weekend, let us welcome students from **CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel, St Gabriel's Primary and Secondary School** who will be serving in some of the masses as lectors and hospitality ministers.

Safe Management Measures Update

Current check-in procedures for Vaccination-Differentiated (VDS) Masses remain unchanged. The mask-wearing requirement for indoor religious activities has been removed. If you are coughing/sneezing or not feeling well, kindly put on your mask or stay home.

NON-VDS MASSES (500 PAX):

- Weekday Masses (**EXCEPT SPECIFIED SOLEMNITY MASSES**)
- Sat 6.30am, Sun 7am, Sun 5.30pm

VDS MASSES (700 PAX):

- Sat 5.30pm, Sun 9am, Sun 11am

As per MCCY guidelines, we regret that we may have to refuse entry when the maximum capacity has been reached.

** Vaccination-Differentiated*

THINGS TO NOTE

- Trace-Together App/token and ID **NOT REQUIRED** for Weekday & Sat AM Masses except specified Solemnity Masses.
- Trace-Together App/token and ID **REQUIRED** for VDS Masses for Vaccination status verification and headcount.
- ID **REQUIRED** for Sunday non-VDS Masses for headcount.
- Mass Entrance: Weekday & Sat AM Masses - all doors; Sun 7am Mass - Choir Entrance only; all other Weekend Masses - Choir Entrance and Foyer.

The Rosary will be prayed 30 mins before all weekday Masses.

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'. Please write 'Mass Collection' behind the cheque. Mail cheques to **63A Chartwell Drive, Singapore 558758**.

LIFE: INTO HIS LIKENESS BY DR EDWARD SRI

Do you desire for a deeper relationship with Jesus? Join us in a five-part series of videos presented by Dr Edward Sri that aims to help us follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit and be transformed ever more into his likeness. All are welcome!

Dates: 30 Sep, 7 Oct, 14 Oct, 21 Oct, 4 Nov, 11 Nov (Fridays)
Time: 8pm - 10pm
Venue: Jeremiah Room
(Parish Centre, Level 2)
Register: WhatsApp Desmond Cai (9011 5076)

CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE: PRO-LIFE ROSARY BY PREGNANCY CRISIS & SUPPORT

The Pro-Life Rosary is a beautiful way to pray for the unborn children and all who are affected by abortion. Let our Rosaries be our weapon against the culture of death and let us pray for the dawning of a new culture, the culture of LIFE! Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us! Come and join us to pray together on **Mon 12 Sep 2022, 8.30pm**. For more information on Pregnancy Crisis & Support, visit www.pregnancycrisis.sg

Zoom Meeting Details

Meeting ID: 848 6814 1275
Passcode: 242828
Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84868141275?pwd=REdnenk4cWY4UTY0c1RSNGVJeXFyZz09>



RCIY Retreat: Who Do You Say I Am?

Last weekend, fourteen youths attended their first RCIY retreat. Held on SFX parish grounds, they were led by the enthusiastic service team and members from the 1Cor12 group. The 3-day retreat entitled, 'Who Do You Say I Am?', began on Friday evening and ended with the 11am mass on Sunday.

Through a series of presentations, sharing, para-liturgies, prayer and worship, the attendees were led through the story of Zacchaeus to a deeper awareness of their identity as sons and daughters of God. New friendships were made and sealed as they bonded over games and hearty home-cooked meals! Some came without quite knowing what to expect, while some had questions and doubts. But as the weekend progressed, barriers fell and hearts were opened and softened. The Holy Spirit was gently working in their midst, leading them to connecting with Jesus in a personal way and experiencing His presence and love. The personal testimonies of the presenters also helped to give context to lessons from the Zacchaeus story – how in our own lives, Jesus doesn't save his mercy for the "worthy," but lavishes it on everyone, because we are all in need of His saving love. Jesus' love and unconditional acceptance of Zacchaeus took him by surprise and changed him radically for the better.

Let's continue to pray for each of our young enquirers as they respond to God's invitation to seek Him and continue their RCIY journey towards baptism next year. Here are some of the inspiring sharings from the participants.

"I really enjoyed the retreat - it helped improve my relationship with God and strengthened my relationship with the RCIY group. I got to hear others' experiences as Catholics and reflect on my own journey. We had many opportunities to journal our thoughts and feelings. The one-on-one talk with one of my facilitators and the prayer session also helped me open up more to God as well. The food and activities were so good too! Overall, the experience in the retreat helped me open up to God and deepen my relationship with Him. :) " - **Vivian, 14**

"I learnt about the story of Zacchaeus which showed me how Jesus loves all of us despite some things we have or could have done wrong." - **Charlton, 14**

"I would like to thank God for giving me an opportunity to strengthen my relationship with Him and to understand Him better, through the sharings from the story of Zacchaeus and the interactions with my brothers and sisters-in-Christ." - **Dro, 23**

"At the start of the retreat, we were asked to list 3 things we wanted from it, to which I wrote: clarity regarding my relationship with God, friendship and joy. Upon reflection at the end of the retreat, I was amazed that I had received every single thing I asked for! I am very thankful for this and it led me to take the first step to saying "yes" to God!" - **Zoe, 17**

"The RCIY retreat was the first step for me to allow God back into my life after many years. During the retreat, I received strength, courage, and I experienced God's love. I am very grateful to everyone involved in the retreat - their love for God is genuine and inspiring." - **Naomi, 20**

"My experience during this retreat helped me to re-centre myself, and I felt closer to God! Through all the reflections and worship, it made God's presence more known to me, which made me more thankful that He has always been there and is always working through me. From someone who chose to learn more about this faith on my own accord with no prior background, I feel more assured after the retreat that I am taking the right steps. I feel like my faith is stronger, with many of my doubts and fears fading away, allowing me to receive Him more openly than ever." - **Celeste, 20**



The Story of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Early in the fourth century, Saint Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the second-century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher on that spot. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman.

The cross immediately became an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head: Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day, the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614, 15 years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

Reflection

More than anything else, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is a celebration and commemoration of God's greatest work: his salvific death on the Cross and His Resurrection, through which death was defeated and the doors to Heaven opened.

The entrance antiphon for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection: through him we are saved and made free."

Sources: Franciscan Media; Catholic News Agency



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg

MASS TIMES

WEEKDAY MASSES

Mon - Thu:
6.30pm

Tue - Sat:
6.30am

Fri:
8pm

WEEKEND MASSES

Sat: 5.30pm*

Sun: 7am, 9am*, 11am*, 5.30pm
(There is currently no Confession before Mass)

***For Vaccinated Only**

MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

9am

CONFESSION

Contact Parish Office to make an appointment.

Fri:
4pm - 6pm

Sat:
10am - 12pm

OPENING HOURS

MAIN GATE

Mon - Sun:
5am - 11pm

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

Mon - Sun:
7am - 11pm

Closed on Public Holidays

COLUMBARIUM

Mon to Sat:
10am - 6pm

Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

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

Spiritual preparation is held on the last Friday of every odd month. Baptism is held on the first Sunday of the following month. For registration, please refer to our website.



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. 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