



Disciples
Making Disciples



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For His Way are not Our Ways

4th Sunday of Advent
18 Dec 2022

Is 7:10 – 14
Rm 1:1 – 7
Mt 1:18 – 24

In today's first reading, God challenged Ahaz to ask for a sign. But Ahaz refused, claiming that he did not want to test the Lord. (Is 7:10 – 11) Ahaz was the twelfth king of Judah, the son and successor of Jotham. At twenty, Ahaz became king and reigned for sixteen years. He was an evil king (see 2 Kgs 16:2), even sacrificing his son by fire to the false god Moloch (cf. Lev 18:21).

Was Ahaz such a righteous man that he refused to ask for a sign as he did not want to test God? It was as if he was practicing what Moses commanded, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deut 6:16). Though the words are similar, the hearts are far apart. More likely, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign because if God fulfilled the sign, he would feel "obligated" to believe. However, whenever God invites us to ask for signs, it is not considered as testing God if we do. (cf. Mal 3:10) Have we not, in some way and degree, been like Ahaz? Have we not rejected the gifts of God for silly and strange reasons? When we are successful in life, we tend to become more self-reliant and independent. It is unsurprising then that we too, sometimes rely on ourselves rather than on God. There is nothing wrong in becoming successful, but do we give glory to God when we are successful, or do we credit the glory to ourselves?

If we place ourselves in the shoes of Joseph, we too might have harboured thoughts of divorce to

avoid public shame. Human as he was, he was probably troubled by Mary's mysterious pregnancy, her future, and what he could do to alleviate her shame. Although he had decided to divorce her silently, he was certainly not comfortable with the decision either. As a simple woman, Mary was probably challenged to explain herself; after all, how can a virginal conception take place? Even if Mary could articulate the experience, Joseph might not have accepted nor understood it. The turning point came when the angel of the Lord intervened through his dream not to divorce Mary and even gave Joseph the name of the child - Emmanuel.

Catholic tradition postulates three main interpretations explaining why Joseph could have resolved to end his betrothal to Mary. One of these interpretations suggests that Joseph being a righteous man shuns immorality and directs his life by the Law of God, and suspected Mary of adultery when he discovered her pregnancy. Therefore, he intended to pursue a divorce in accord with the Law until the angel revealed to him the supernatural cause of the conception. Proponents of this view include St Justin Martyr, St John Chrysostom, and St Augustine. (cf. Ignatian Press Study Bible footnote on Mt 1:19). Although he was a man of great faith, he needed to be persuaded that all these events were part of God's divine plan of salvation. God had to intervene to alleviate all the mental stress and possibly sleepless nights, and Joseph in obedience took the right path.

In contrast, Ahaz was evil and prideful, unwilling to submit to God. Yet despite his sinfulness and evil ways, God was still willing to bless him if only he were to surrender himself to God. Thinking that his success was dependent on his



***"He who trusts
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who trusts in God
can do all things."***

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

strength, he shunned God and relied on himself. As St Alphonsus Liguori once said "He who trusts himself is lost. He who trusts in God can do all things." God's plan of salvation was fulfilled simply because Joseph was willing to surrender and to allow God to guide his life. Ahaz's evil intentions stem from his lack of belief and trust in God's mercy and love for him. Joseph, on the other hand, trusted that God would make a way, for "[God's] thoughts are not [our] thoughts, nor [God's] ways [our] ways" (Isaiah 55:8). As we continue to live out our faith, let us remember that without God, we can do nothing (Jn 15:5); and "[we] can do all things through Christ who strengthens [us]" (Phil 4:13).

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



PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

Please note the Parish Office operating hours:

- 24 Dec & 31 Dec: 9.30am - 1.30pm
- 25 - 26 Dec, 1 - 2 Jan: Closed

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

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



- Thu 22 Dec: 4pm - 6pm, 7.30pm - 9.30pm
- Fri 23 Dec: 4pm - 6pm

GIFT COLLECTION

This weekend, there will be a call for contributions for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) programme. GIFT is a regular giving campaign to fund the archdiocese's organisations involved in youth, evangelisation, catechesis, formation etc. and building projects. 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. More info at catholicfoundation.sg

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

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

Date: Mon 19 Dec 2022
Time: 8pm - 9.30pm
Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Room

ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICES IN SERANGOON DISTRICT

- Mon 19 Dec, 8pm - Church of St Vincent de Paul
- Tue 20 Dec, 8.30pm - St Anne's Church
- Wed 21 Dec, 8pm - Church of The Immaculate Heart of Mary

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve (Sat 24 Dec) 5.30pm Pageant, 6pm Mass 8.30pm Carolling, 9pm Mass 11.30pm Carolling, 12am Mass	Christmas Day (Sun 25 Dec)* 9am, 11am <i>*There will be no 7am & 5.30pm Masses.</i> Mon 26 Dec: 9am Mass only
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ADVENT PRAYER TREE

What better idea than to give someone in need the gift of intentional prayer this Christmas? Just as we did last year, think of someone to pray for - either to return to Church or be open to knowing the Lord. The prayer tags will be available for you to write your prayers and drop them into the box located outside JPll Hall or next to the crib in church.

CONSIDERATE PARKING THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Just a gentle reminder to park considerately, especially at Cooling Close and nearby roads during the festive season and where parking may be limited. Remember that we are Christians at all times and our every word and action represent not just ourselves but who the church and Jesus are too.

DO NOT PARK...

Within 3m from a fire-hydrant

Within 6m from a junction

Within 9m from a bus stop/bus bay

In front of any gate
(ensure the vehicle may drive in/out of their premises)

UNBROKEN
SINGLE WHITE LINE &
DOUBLE WHITE LINES
DOUBLE YELLOW LINES

No parking at all times

UNBROKEN
SINGLE YELLOW
LINES

No parking from
7am to 7pm
(except on Sundays and Public Holidays)

SINGLE WHITE
ZIG ZAG LINE

No stopping at all times
on this road (demerit points)

PEDESTRIAN OR
ZEBRA CROSSING

No parking at all times
in this zone (demerit points)

*Violations against parking will be enforced by LTA enforcement officers through the hotline or website

Please do not park indiscriminately. Do ensure that our neighbours have access to their houses and rubbish trucks/buses can pass through the narrow lanes.

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**.

CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE - BACK TO SCHOOL FUN WITH YOUR FAMILY

The brand new year is approaching and before we enter into hustling mode again, let's take some time to bond with our family and energize ourselves for the year ahead. Join us at Catholic Family Life's family bonding event, with big head prawning, Longkang fishing for kids, free ice cream, live music and more!

Date: Mon 2 Jan 2023

Time: 2pm - 4pm

Venue: Fish @ AMK (The Grassroots Club)

Cost: \$150 (Family of up to 5)

Register: <https://bit.ly/cscsbreathe>

REGISTRATION FOR 2023 CATECHISM

Registration for children from **K1 to L1 in 2023** will be online via myCatholic.sg/Catechism. Parents must create an account for the child and login into the child's account to register for catechism. The child's baptism certificate must be uploaded at the time of registration. **Registration closes 31 Dec 2022.**

For other levels, please email catechism@sfxchurch.sg for the registration process. For further enquiries, please contact 9749 1635 (Dan Lai).

PIETA SINGAPORE: DEC MONTHLY SESSION

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents who have united in faith to seek God's comfort, wisdom and hope. The session, run by bereaved parents, meets monthly to pray, reflect and break open the Word of God. Any parent who has lost a child (regardless of age and no matter how recent or long ago) is invited to come and be united in faith. PIETA has recently resumed their face-to-face monthly sessions. For more info, email pieta.singapore@gmail.com or visit www.PietaSingapore.org. Details of the next session:

Date: Tue 27 Dec 2022

Time: 7.30pm - 9pm

Venue: Agape Village (Toa Payoh Lorong 8)

VERBUM DEI: VOCATION SEMINAR

Vocation Seminar for young single women 17 - 28 years old. Join us for an afternoon to learn more about consecrated life and vocation discernment with time for personal prayer. Tea will be provided. This seminar will be led by Sr. Sandra Seow, FMVD.

Date: Sat 4 Feb 2023

Time: 2pm - 6pm

Venue: Verbum Dei House (4 Sommerville Road, S358228)

Email: verbumdeispore@yahoo.com.sg (Register by 28 Jan 2023)

A Cheerful Giver

The Christmas Season is here, and there are Christmas shopping lists to be filled, for it is the Season of gift giving. As Christians, we are called to make Giving a regular and natural part of our Christian Living, not just during Christmas Season.

We are all blessed differently in quantity and quality, in terms of intellect, talents, skills, and material wealth. "God is able to bless us abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). We should see ourselves as "Streams of Blessings, not Reservoirs", so that we can in turn, use and share our blessings to bless others (1 Tim 6:17-18).

God loves a Cheerful Giver, and like the poor widow's offering, it is not the size of the offering but the attitude of the Giver that matters, "for if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have" (2 Cor 8:12). When we believe and leave the "How" to God, our gift takes on a "Ripple Effect" that will manifest in ways that God intends.

So why not take out the stress in gifting this season? Instead of running around trying to find that "perfect gift" for your loved ones, look at gift giving in a new light. Consider sentimental gifts, like a scrapbook, a nostalgic memento or even religious gifts or experiences. But if these are too risky a gamble to take, then gift cards that give more flexibility and freedom could be another option. A recent newspaper article suggested that, "the recipients of gifts are happier with items that are useful and reliable, even if they are not brand new or novel" (Straits Times, 7 Wed 2022).

As William Cardinal Goh said in his Homily during the recent SFX Feast Mass, it is in using our blessings for others, that we experience their blessings in return onto ourselves, which is that of pure joy.



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



What's Coming Up

in the second half of December

FRI 23 DEC, 7.30PM

As part of our Christmas Fiesta activities, our SFX Youth Choir will be singing some Christmas carols at **myVillage (1 Maju Ave)** on **Fri 23 Dec, 7.30pm**. So bring along your family and friends to spread some Christmas cheer and joy!



Christmas CAROLLING



Christmas Fiesta

ALL ARE WELCOME

FRI 30 DEC, 7PM - 10PM

Join us for a night of fun, food and fellowship. Sway to the music of our live band and warm up your vocals for some good ol' carolling. Enjoy the Christmas

pageant and look out for a little surprise segment too! There's something for everyone, so bring along your family and friends, and come on down!



Scan the QR Code or visit tinyurl.com/sfxmasfiesta2022 to find out more!

Christmas Fiesta Volunteers Needed

Calling for volunteers to help with specific tasks during our Christmas Fiesta. Tasks range from food service, arranging tables/chairs, ushering to cleaning up. If you can help, please contact 9632 3489 (Thud Chee) or 9091 3066 (Sharon).



CARPARK CLOSURE FOR CHRISTMAS FIESTA

Please note that the carpark will be closed on **Fri 30 Dec, 6.30pm - 10.30pm**. Do consider walking to church; otherwise carpool or take public transport.



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)

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

Mon - Sat:
9.30am - 6.30pm
Sun: 8.30am - 1pm
Closed on Public Holidays

ADORATION ROOM

Mon - Sun:
7am - 11pm
Closed on Public Holidays

LIBRARY

Sat:
6.30pm - 7.15pm
Sun:
8am - 1pm, 6.30pm - 7.15pm

COLUMBARIUM

Mon to Sat:
10am - 6pm
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

ANOIDTING 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/second 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 and outside JP11 Hall. 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