






**Disciples**  
*Making Disciples*

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## Sower, Seed and Soil

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time  
16 Jul 2023

Is 55:10-11  
Rom 8:18-23  
Mt 13:1-23



*We are the soil where the Lord tirelessly sows the seed of His Word and His love.*

The parable of the sower is the first in a series of seven parables on the Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Matthew. A hearer can draw multiple meanings from a single parable. For that matter, a parable never runs out of meaning.

Indeed, parables give spiritual nourishment in plain language to ordinary people while providing even more profound insights to those who seek to understand its deeper truths through prayer and study. Parables also become clearer when we imagine where Jesus would have been as he taught, as he did with the parable of the sower.

Many black basalt rocks scatter the hilly terrain of Galilee. Before planting their seeds, farmers would clear these rocks lest the seeds die on rocky ground. Birds also migrate through the region because of its mild climate. Swarming the area for seeds when farmers begin planting, they must be chased away. Finally, drought in the land often brings dry seasons and crop failure. Farmers must have enough good soil and water for their seeds to thrive.

Scripture scholars tell us that the parable of the sower relates to the agricultural practices of Jesus' time. In Jesus' parable, however, the seeds fall on various kinds of soil. This must have surprised the listening crowd as it was not the usual practice of the farmer at the time.

The typical farmer in Jesus' time was poor. He did not have seeds to waste, and he would be careful not to let the seeds fall on thorny, rocky, or infertile soil. The farmer could only afford his seeds to fall on the ground that would yield the best fruit.

Why do we hear from Jesus about the sower sowing his seeds unsparingly on every type of soil?

In one of his addresses, Pope Francis shares that such is the heart of God our Father, *"The Word of God is a seed—which in itself is fruitful and effective — and God scatters it everywhere, paying no mind to waste. Each of us is ground on which the seed of the Word falls, and no one is excluded."* (Angelus, July 12, 2022)

Sometimes we feel like we resemble the path, often distracted or preoccupied with many interests, losing our zeal for silence, reflection or dialogue with the Lord. Or perhaps we are like rocky ground, open to receiving His Word, but struggling to let it take root through the deepening of our lives. Maybe we find ourselves like the bramble bush beset with worldly affairs and material idols, unable to distinguish among the many other voices the voice of the Lord.

But such is God's generosity despite the "different terrain" that we are. Pope Francis continues, *"The seed of God's Word falls on all kinds of soil."*

Not only that, *"We are the soil where the Lord tirelessly sows the seed of His Word and His love."* (Angelus, July 12, 2022)

It is often inferred that Jesus identifies himself with the sower of the parable in the very experience of his preaching. In this image, Pope Benedict XVI suggests that God doesn't impose but rather proposes.

*"Basically, God's true "Parable" is Jesus himself, his Person who, in the sign of humanity, hides and at the same time reveals his divinity. In this manner, God does not force us to believe in him but attracts us to him with the truth and goodness of his incarnate Son: love, in fact, always respects freedom."* (Angelus, July 10, 2011)

Through the scattering of the seeds, Jesus attracts us not by conquering us but by giving himself to us. The Word of God, symbolised by the seeds, is more than an abstract word but Christ Himself — freely given to us, as the One who sets us free.

In the light of the parable of the sower, may we become like the good soil ploughed and carefully cultivated to help ripen the seed of the Word so that we may bear good fruit for ourselves and our brothers and sisters.

## Announcements

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



**SCAN QR CODE  
FOR MASS HYMNS**  
[www.sfxchurch.sg/mass](http://www.sfxchurch.sg/mass)

### FAULTY CHURCH PEWS?

Spot any faulty or damaged pews in church?  
Scan the QR Code to share with us at  
[tinyurl.com/SFXFacilityReport](http://tinyurl.com/SFXFacilityReport)



### GIFT COLLECTION

This weekend, there will be a call for contributions for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) programme to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church. GIFT is a regular giving campaign to fund the Archdiocese's organisations involved in youth, evangelisation, catechesis, formation etc. and building projects. You can give via PayNow (UEN: **201231391K**) or drop your contributions into the GIFT donation box. More info at [catholicfoundation.sg](http://catholicfoundation.sg).



### CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer Meeting is on **Mon 17 Jul, 8pm** at **SFX Auditorium (Parish Centre, Level 3)**. There will be Praise & Worship followed by a talk on 'Jesus Saves You And Sets You Free' by Fr Benedict Chng. All are welcome!

### INTERCESSORY

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

**Date:** Mon 17 Jul  
**Time:** 8pm - 9.30pm  
**Venue:** Mount Tabor Adoration Room

### LITTLE SHEPHERDS' SCHOOLHOUSE IS HIRING: PRESCHOOL EDUCATOR

Little Shepherds' Schoolhouse @ Church of St Francis Xavier requires a qualified preschool educator with at least two years of relevant experience. Those interested, please email your CV and salary expectation to [lss.recruit@catholicpreschool.edu.sg](mailto:lss.recruit@catholicpreschool.edu.sg)

### SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP AT JPIL HALL - FOR DINE-IN ONLY

Please be informed that with effect from August, the food available on Sundays morning is for dine-in only. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we look forward to continue serving you!



### 3RD WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY - THANKSGIVING DINNER (FINAL CHANCE!)

In 2021, Pope Francis instituted the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly to be observed on the fourth Sunday in July, close to the feast of Jesus' grandparents, Saints Joachim and Anne. To celebrate this special day, we are offering an exclusive dinner catered from Jack's Place for you to serve your grandparents/elderly. Tickets are still available at the Parish Office on a first-come, first-served basis and only while stocks last. Please bring the exact cash amount and there will be no advance/phone bookings.

**Date:** Sat 22 Jul  
**Time:** 7.30pm  
**Venue:** JPIL Hall  
**Capacity:** 30 pairs  
**Cost:** \$90/pair

### ST JEROME LIBRARY: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Our parish library is looking for volunteers who can help with updating book borrowings & returns from parishioners as well as adding and tagging of new books into the Librarything system. Training will be provided. In addition, volunteers can also help with researching and putting up displays related to the Sunday scripture readings and the Feast days celebrated each month. If you are able to commit **at least 1 hour each month on a Sunday** anytime between 8am - 1pm, please come by the library on a Sunday or email [stjeromelibrarysfx@gmail.com](mailto:stjeromelibrarysfx@gmail.com) with your Name and Mobile Number and we will get in touch with you.

### SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL (SSVP): A TALK ON CARING FOR DEMENTIA

Interested to know more about Dementia? The Society of St Vincent de Paul has organised a talk with Dementia Singapore to help us understand what is Dementia, how to manage it and build a dementia-friendly community. If you are interested to know more, please register with the Parish Office or scan the QR code **before 8 Aug 2023**.

**Date:** Sat 12 Aug 2023  
**Time:** 10am - 12pm  
**Venue:** JPIL Hall  
**Register:**  
[tinyurl.com/C4D2023](http://tinyurl.com/C4D2023)



### LIVING THE FAITH EVERYDAY (LiFE): SACRAMENTS OF THE EUCHARIST AND RECONCILIATION

Come join LiFE on this six-part video series as we explore the beauty of Holy Communion and encounter God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Experience the transformative power of grace that God offers us in these Sacraments!

**Dates:** 11 Aug - 15 Sep (Every Friday)  
**Time:** 8pm - 9.30pm  
**Venue:** JPIL Hall  
**Enquiries:** Desmond (9011 5076)

### PIETA SINGAPORE: JULY MONTHLY ZOOM SESSION

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents who have united in faith to seek God's comfort, wisdom and hope. A monthly session, run by bereaved parents, is held to pray, reflect and break open the WORD OF GOD. We invite any parent who has lost a child (regardless of age and no matter how recent or long ago) to unite with us in faith. If you wish to join us, please email us directly at [pieta.singapore@gmail.com](mailto:pieta.singapore@gmail.com) for the Zoom link.

**Date:** Tue 25 Jul 2023  
**Time:** 7.30pm - 9.15pm

### CENACLE SISTERS: QUIETING THE SOUL CHIANGMAI 2023

A silent 8-full day or 5-full day retreat set in the beautiful environment of the Seven Fountains Retreat Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Registration closes on 15 Sep or when it is full. For further enquiries, contact 9298 5808 / 9722 3148 or email [cenaclesingapore@gmail.com](mailto:cenaclesingapore@gmail.com) or visit [www.cenaclemission.com](http://www.cenaclemission.com)

#### Three choices of dates (includes travel time):

1. 26 Nov - 5 Dec 2023 (8 days)
2. 29 Nov - 5 Dec 2023 (5 days)
3. 7 Dec - 13 Dec 2023 (5 days)



# *L9 Camp: Come, Follow Me!*

The L9 Retreat held at St. Francis Xavier during the last weekend of the June holidays was centered around the powerful call “Come, Follow Me!” (Matthew 4:18-22). A total of 45 SFX and 35 SBC teens gathered together, embarking on a transformative journey where they were led to encounter Jesus Christ and acknowledge His Lordship in their lives. It was truly inspiring to witness the tremendous growth in our teens’ attitude and demeanor over the course of four days. Initially, they appeared reserved and unresponsive, but as the retreat progressed, they gradually opened up to God, actively engaging with the teachings, activities, and prayer sessions. This remarkable transformation brought immense joy to our dedicated service team, who devoted themselves tirelessly to ministering to the teens. We would like to share some heartwarming testimonies from this impactful retreat experience:



The camp was very enlightening for me and I was able to experience God through the prayer sessions. It made me feel very relieved as it felt like all my worries and struggles were being lifted to God. It was heart-warming to see all of us opening our hearts to Jesus, through reconciliation, and willingly agreeing to follow in his footsteps. Throughout the 4 days, I grew closer to God and was able to foster friendships with my classmates. I feel that the camp was an amazing experience. — **Loren Koh**

“I felt that the camp was very fun and was super emotional for a lot of us. It was a new experience since St Berns has never held a retreat so it was an amazing experience. I was really struck by the session on the Cycle of Freedom (Surrender, Rest, Acceptance). I felt that I could relate to it and I even managed to try to follow it during the second night.” — **Jayden Ou**

“I think that the L9 retreat was very fulfilling. I managed to build a stronger relationship with God. The facilitators were amazing. They definitely played a big part in the whole retreat. The retreat was perfect, but I wish the camp was longer. I wish the sessions and the sharings were longer too! I learnt about how as a Catholic, that it is not just a religion, but having a relationship with God. Being a Catholic is based on trust and a belief in God. It is a battle of one’s pride to want your own way. I really felt the difference after camp.

Before camp I felt this emptiness, and I felt a need to rely on a lot of earthly things, such as my phone, money, social media, etc. I found that during the camp, I didn’t even want my phone back because I knew how it would send me back to the world that is filled with temptations of Satan. I found my purpose in life and I found my identity; my identity is to be a child of God and to follow him through the adventures that He goes through with me. I learnt that - Life will never be boring when you follow and trust in the Lord. As long as you follow him, you know that you will always be loved. Following him is knowing and trusting that God always has your back.

I honestly didn’t expect myself to cry that much during camp either because I dislike crying in front of others, but it was like something just happened, and I just felt comfortable in camp. It was truly an honour to be invited to attend this L9 retreat, and it would definitely be a memory that I will remember forever.” — **Alexis Tay**



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



"The retreat exceeded my expectations and I enjoyed myself even more than I thought I would. I became closer to many of my catechism classmates, the service team, and most importantly, God. It was a very peaceful four days with no stress or worry about anything else outside of church. This was a good end to my holidays. This peace readied me for the new school term ahead. Something that really warmed my heart was watching all the participants around me gradually grow closer to God and it was an amazing sight which made me realise how powerful God is. This also made me want to volunteer for future church camps and events like these when I am confirmed so that i can help and see more youths encounter God's love." — **Agnes Wong**

"The retreat was truly an unforgettable experience I will hold close to my heart forever! During the camp, I was able to grow closer to God, and really listen to Him. The retreat gave me the time and space to truly reflect on my relationship with God throughout my life and made me desire to follow and trust Jesus with all my heart! I was also able to experience a sense of community with the people around me. Surrounded by people liked my facilitators, who spread so much warmth and love with a lot of laughter and tears shared, the people I met during the camp will hold a very special place in my heart." — **Filomena Magha**

"This L9 camp was certainly a fruitful experience for me. At first, I dreaded the camp. My thoughts were, '*These 4 days at sfx would be a complete waste of time!*' or '*praise and worship sessions are useless!*' but I was proven entirely wrong!

The sessions were interesting, well-taught and relatable. I had a lot of time to self-reflect during adoration and journaling. One thing I struggled with was my openness to God's voice and this camp helped me overcome it.

Additionally, before this camp I prioritised my school commitments over the church. I was so fixated on chasing expectations and achievements. This camp has taught me that the satisfaction of "*status, labels and achievements*" is temporary, but the kingdom of heaven is eternal. This has given me new insight on what truly matters in life, and I am now ever more determined to improve my relationship with God. Lastly, the camp facilitators, service team and friends were all so kind and supportive. This camp surprised me and made me realise how wonderful God's work is." — **Judah Lee**

## 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

### BACK GATE

**Mon - Sun:**  
5am - 1am

### 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

**Sun:**  
8am - 1pm

### COLUMBARIUM

**Mon - Fri:**  
10am - 6pm

**Sat - Sun:**  
8.30am - 6pm  
Closed on Public Holidays

## ANOIDING 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](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg)



For more L9 testimonies, visit [www.sfxchurch.sg/making-disciples](http://www.sfxchurch.sg/making-disciples)