



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Predestined for Heaven by Hope

17th Sunday of Ordinary Time
30 Jul 2023

1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12
Rom 8:28-30
Mt 13:44-52

The second reading from St Paul to the Romans deals with the subject of predestination, a mystery revealed but misunderstood and misinterpreted by many, causing confusion and despair amongst believers. John Calvin, one of the Protestant reformers, popularised the idea that we are all foreordained, irrespective of human will, to either heaven or hell - a concept that is widely known as Double Predestination. In other words, God has already predetermined who will be saved and who will be damned, regardless of how that person responds to grace. The implication of this is that both our sins and any good that we might do in our lives have no consequence - it is already predetermined or "fated". This is not what St Paul meant from the second reading today and not what the Catholic Church teaches.

When St Paul talks about "the ones he (God) chose specially" or in other translations "those whom he foreknew" (Rom 8:29), he re-affirms what Psalm 139 states - that God knows when I sit down or rise up; discerns my thoughts from afar; even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O God, you know it altogether. The word "foreknew" was translated from the original Greek "*pro-egno*" which means to

know beforehand. In other words, God "chose" because he already knew how we would choose to act in every moment of our lives. The Catholic Church puts it this way, that to God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. (CCC 600) Therefore, even before God created time, he already knew how each one of us will act or make choices at every moment of our lives.

The Bible says "It was he (God) who created man in the beginning, and left him in the power of his own inclinations. If you will, you can keep the commandments, they will save you." (Sir 15:14-15) Out of gratuitous love, God created Man with free will. With free will, man has the power to choose either to love God or reject him. At the same time God desires "all men to be saved and to come to the

knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4) and therefore, predestines no one to go to hell. It is our free will choices in life, which God already foreknew since the beginning of time, which therefore "predestines" our final salvation. Damnation will require "a wilful turning away from God (mortal sin)... and persistence in it until the end". (CCC 1037)

Thomas Merton had an elegant and inspired way of reconciling the seemingly opposing facts of God's sovereignty and Man's free-will. He writes: "One of the greatest speculative problems in theology is resolved in practical Christian living by the virtue of hope. The mystery of free will and grace, of predestination and cooperation with God is resolved in hope which effectively coordinates the two in right relation to one another. The one who hopes in God does not know that he is predestined to Heaven. But if he perseveres in his hope and continually makes the acts of will inspired by divine grace he will be among the predestined: for that is the object of his hope and 'hope does not disappoint' (Rom 5:5). Each act of hope is his own free will, yet it is also a gift of God. And the very essence of hope is freely to expect all the graces necessary for salvation as free gifts from God. The free will that resolves to hope in His gifts recognises, by that very fact, that its own act of hope is also His gift: and yet it also sees that if it did not will to hope, it would not let itself be moved by Him. Hope is the wedding of two freedoms, human and divine, in the acceptance of a love that is at once a promise and the beginning of fulfilment." (No Man is an Island, Chpt 2 para 10, Thomas Merton)



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of two freedoms,
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Thomas Merton

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 CHURCH PEWS?

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



SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (DAY OF OBLIGATION)

Mon 14 Aug (Vigil Mass): 6.30pm

Tue 15 Aug: 6.30am, 6.30pm, 8.30pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

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

Fridays: 4pm - 6pm

Saturdays: 10am - 12pm

INTERCESSORY

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

Date: Mon 31 Jul

Time: 8pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Room

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer Meeting is on **Mon 31 Jul, 8pm** at **SFX Auditorium (Parish Centre, Level 3)**. There will be Praise & Worship followed by a talk on 'Come Back To Me' by Fr Nathaniel Xavier. There will be confession and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome!

LANDINGS: WELCOME HOME

'Welcoming Home Catholics Seeking A Reconnection' - Landings Singapore presents a new 10-week programme for Catholics seeking a reconnection to the faith. It runs from **4 Sep 2023 through 14 Nov 2023**, every Monday or Tuesday from **8pm to 10pm**. All sessions will be held in person at Church of the Holy Spirit or Church of Queen of Peace. We invite you to register your interest at returning@landings.org.sg or visit www.landings.org.sg

SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP AT JP II HALL - FOR DINE-IN ONLY

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



OF MARTYRS, MIGRANTS, AND MYSTERIES: AN INTRIGUING JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Join this thrilling investigative voyage in ancestor tracing, with its twists, turns and brick walls; where fact is often stranger than fiction. Here, buried family secrets come to light, ordinary heroes fight for their faith, and legend has it there is a remote village deep in the heart of China named 'Bethlehem'. The speaker, Cyprian Lim, is a father of seven, a researcher and author of *My Maternal Roots: A Story of Family, Faith and Freedom*.

Date: Thu 10 Aug
Time: 8pm
Venue: JP II Hall
Register:
tinyurl.com/AITJ2023

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: JP II Hall
Register:
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: JP II Hall
Enquiries: Desmond (9011 5076)

PREGNANCY CRISIS & SUPPORT - A SERVICE OF CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE: LIFEMARK MOVIE SCREENING

"This film will touch your heart, marriage, family and faith!"

Based on a true story, Lifemark tells the story of a young man who was adopted at birth and embarks on a journey of self-discovery when he decides to reconnect with his biological parents. Come together with your family and friends to watch this heart-warming movie that depicts the beauty when a person makes the choice for life and loving God. Register for your tickets now at bit.ly/lifemark-movie

Lifemark Movie Screening

Date: Tue 8 Aug 2023

Time: 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Church of the Holy Spirit
(Auditorium, Level 4)

Followed by

Reflection & Untold Stories of Hope

Time: 9.30pm - 10pm

Venue: Church of the Holy Spirit
(Auditorium, Level 4)

SONS OF ST JOSEPH

A community of men who gather in Fraternal Fellowship to encounter God our Loving Father, proclaiming Him through living out our Christian faith in our daily lives. The group shares a simple meal with each other followed by worship, faith formation talks related to Christian Manhood, with testimonies, small group sharing and intercessory prayers. For further enquiries, please contact 9005 8050 (Adrian Lim).

When: 2nd & 4th Saturday
of the month

Time: 8am - 10am

Venue: Church of the Holy Spirit
(Room #03-06)

Power of the Rosary



The rosary is one of the most cherished prayers of our Catholic Church. During this recitation, the individual meditates on the saving mysteries of our Lord's life and the faithful witness of our Blessed Mother. Journeying through the Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous and Glorious mysteries of the rosary, the individual brings to mind our Lord's incarnation, His passion and death and His resurrection from the dead. In so doing, the rosary assists us in growing in a deeper appreciation of these mysteries, in uniting our life more closely to our Lord and in imploring His graced assistance to live the faith. We also ask for the prayers of our Blessed Mother, who leads all believers to her Son.

The fact that our Church continues to include the Feast of the Holy Rosary on the liturgical calendar testifies to the importance and goodness of this form of prayer. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, "The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of this world, and open on the substance of the next. The power of the rosary is beyond description."

4 REASONS TO PRAY THE ROSARY

IT'S BIBLICAL
The Rosary contemplates the great mysteries of the Christian Faith; each mystery has its source in the Holy Scriptures.

IT HELPS US BE HOLIER
This prayer has been a great help to many in their path to holiness when prayed with devotion.

THE VIRGIN HAS ASKED US TO
In several Marian apparitions (as Fatima), our Mother has asked us to pray the Rosary for the world's salvation.

IT WEAKENS THE DEVIL
The Rosary has the effect of weakening the action of the devil in the world and in our lives.

INFORMATION BY PERIODISMOCATOLICO.COM

TIPS TO PRAY THE ROSARY EVERY DAY

- Fall asleep praying the Rosary. It is better than counting sheep.
- Say it in moments of sadness or spiritual drought.
- If you can't pray a whole Rosary at once, break it into parts.
- Carry a Rosary in your pocket.
- Use each mystery to ask for a particular intention.
- Say it while you wait (for example, at the bus stop).
- Pray while you walk and think of the people in your life.
- Recite the Rosary while doing chores or while you work out.
- Use images and music. The Rosary is a contemplative prayer.
- If you're upset, pray for the situation that worries you.

SOURCE: ACIPRENSA.COM

As above, the Rosary is physical. God has given us bodies and souls. When we pray the Rosary we use our bodies. We hold the rosary beads with a crucifix. If possible, we should adopt an intentionally physical posture for prayer — either walking, kneeling or sitting attentively. If possible, we should also use other physical sacramentals like blessed candles, holy water, maybe some incense and holy pictures or statues.

In our parish of Saint Francis Xavier, every 13th of the month the community gathers in front of the grotto to pray the rosary together as a community. Here are some inspired sharings of some who join the group of parishioners for the rosary procession.

"Coming together as one family, one Church to thank our Mother for her love and intercession." - Geraldine

"3 words to describe the rosary session on the 13th of each month at the SFX grotto - beautiful, comforting and uplifting. It is a wonderful feeling seeing a group of people coming together to pray to Mother Mary. Not only is it comforting to know that Our Lady will intercede for us but the knowledge that we are praying together with one common voice is uplifting." - Sandra

References:

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/history-of-the-rosary-1142>
<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/10-reasons-why-the-rosary-is-so-powerful>
<https://catholic-link.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary-rosary-infographics/>

Thanksgiving Dinner for Elderly & Grandparents



On Sat 22 Jul, the night began with grandchildren, sons and daughters who came early to transform JP11 Hall into a posh restaurant. Tickets for the thanksgiving dinner were bought by grandchildren and children honouring their guests for the Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. The event, instituted by Pope Francis in 2021, is now held on the fourth Sunday of July, which is the Sunday closest to the July 26 feast of Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus to bring awareness to all of the faithful of the role they play in our lives. The stories shared and the history of life lived can bring wisdom, and help us in growing to our adulthood.

The servers, i.e., the grandchildren and children, were at the beck and call of our elderly and grandparents throughout the night serving the four course meal provided by Jack's Place. The night was sprinkled with fun, encouraging participation in games like charades and 'How well do you know your spouse?' We had an interesting challenge to 'Please ask a more romantic question,' piped one of our outgoing couple who is 53 years married.

As part of the program, we had a lucky draw with wonderful sponsored gifts. Each sporting recipient had to 'Sing' before being awarded their gift. We ended the night with a sign dance where some of the servers danced to a moving song by Ray Boltz-Thank You. Finally we gifted each guest with a children's book sponsored and written by one of our servers and Thank you cards filled with affirmation, hand written by the servers to their guests. Truly we are grateful for our elderly and grandparents who have passed on to us our faith, made endless sacrifices throughout their lives and witnessed to us virtues of fortitude and perseverance with their lives lived to the fullest. Their lives echoed the theme of this year, 'His mercy is from age to age.' Luke 1:50

Here are some inspired sharings from the participants of the thanksgiving dinner.



From Stephanie (far right) with Darren, Beatrice, Christopher and little Jemma

"I really enjoyed coming together as a community to serve the grandparents and elderly in our parish! It was a blessed night full of fun, laughter and love. How blessed are we to be able to honour our elders and grandparents who are examples of love for us. Thank you to everyone involved!" - Stephanie

Mother and daughter

"The grandparents' dinner was an eye-opener. I was glad to be able to give back to the generation before me and to put myself in their shoes. It was refreshing to see that all of them still have a good sense of humour." - Benita

"We sang grandma's favourite songs from the 'Sound of Music' namely 'Sixteen Going On Seventeen' and 'My Favorite Things'. Made many new friends at the dinner." - Sophie



"I'm happy that I could help to serve my grandparents and give prizes, I also felt that it was nice to talk to other servers" - Aidan



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)

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

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/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