



Disciples
Making Disciples



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A God for all nations and all peoples

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
20 Aug 2023

Isa 56:1, 6-7
Rom 11:13-15, 29-32
Mt 15:21-28

The unifying theme of this week's scripture passages is the extension of God's covenant promise to everyone. Throughout the bible, we hear about how man's disobedience and sin had separated him from God. The covenant made between God and man is more than just a legal contract, it is a commitment to bring man back into the one family of God.

Our salvation history is like a long love story comprising God's repeated attempts to reunite man back to him. Today's scripture passages are such shards of light. The first reading from the Old Testament is from the prophet Isaiah telling of a foreshadowing of God's plan to include the Gentiles - "[t]hus says the Lord ... [f]oreigners who have attached themselves to the Lord" and who come to serve and bring "[t]heir holocausts and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar" and that "my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples" (Isa 56:6-7).

The second reading from St Paul to the Romans sees Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, juxtaposing the lives of the Israelites and the Gentiles. At first glance they seem very dissimilar but Paul's intimation is that they are more intricately

intertwined in God's plan of salvation than meets the eye. He is pointing out a disconcerting truth to the Israelites that their salvation will come only with the ingathering of the faithful Gentiles.

Such prophetic insights of God's long game plan have been evident throughout salvation history. Take Luke's account of Jesus' presentation at the Temple. Led by the Holy Spirit to the Temple, Simeon carried the little Messiah and declared to God that "my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel" (Lk 2:30-32).

Today's Gospel underscores this theme of extending God's covenant to all "nations". It begins with this Canaanite woman appearing before Jesus with the temerity to call out, "Sir, Son of David, take pity on me", begging him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. On top of ignoring her, Jesus asserted that he was "sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" and that "it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs". While the term "dogs" might sound like the derogatory slur Jews often used of Gentiles, Jesus' use of "house-dogs" ("kunaríos" in Greek) really translates to "puppies" which lessens the initial sting somewhat.

That said, the Canaanites had long been seen as sworn enemies of the Israelites and a wicked people steeped deep in the practice of idolatry, child sacrifice and immorality. Yet Jesus who could see into the hearts of people, saw in the undaunted woman's reply "... but even house-dogs can eat the

scraps that fall from their master's table", proof of her unflinching faith. This Canaanite woman was obviously aware that she had no standing in the eyes of the Israelites nor any covenantal claims with God but begged nonetheless for the unmerited mercy from our Lord.

Only then did Jesus' reply to her "Woman, you have great faith" and he healed her daughter. Jesus did not just acknowledge that she had faith but tested her faith to elicit even more faith. What Jesus did with this Canaanite woman was also intended to teach the Israelites a hard truth that God's mercy was not exclusive to the Chosen Ones but accessible also to the foreigners from other nations. Throughout salvation history, God had extended his covenant promises to include people who were non-Jews but desired to be part of God's people.

It is also a reminder that God can and often uses the weak, the foolish as well as the despised to shame the strong, the wise and highly esteemed. It may well be that when God does this for us to see, it may well be an invitation for us to check our own spiritual pride and blind spots of our own faith levels.

How apt is it then to have our responsorial psalm heralding "O God, let all the peoples praise you, let the peoples praise you!" (Ps 66:4) for his abiding goodness continues to beckon one and all to come into his heavenly house.



*"My house shall be
called a house of prayer
for all peoples."
(Isa 56:7)*

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



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.

ARCHDIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR APOSTOLATE OF MANDARIN SPEAKING: MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE (MANDARIN)

Dates: Sun 3 & 10 Sep
Time: 9am - 5pm
Venue: Agape Village
Register:
tinyurl.com/ACAMSMPC2023
Enquiries: 9127 1710 (Winnie)/
9852 4047 (Anna)



ACMI CHARITY GALA DINNER 2023

Join us and celebrate 25 years of being family to migrants at ACMI's Charity Gala Dinner on **20 Oct, 7pm** at Goodwood Park Hotel! Revel in an uplifting evening of celebration, performances, migrant diversity and humanity through arts and culture, as ACMI raises funds to support migrants – our unsung heroes; many of whom work as domestic helpers for our children, caregivers for the elderly, cleaners at our estates, construction workers in nation-building and the list goes on. You can purchase a table of 10 at \$6,000 or seat(s) at \$600 each.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Motorists are reminded to slow down when approaching the ramps and all gratings. Vehicle owners are reminded to be considerate towards the neighbouring residents and ensure your vehicle is not indiscriminately parked. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!



INTERCESSORY

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

Date: Mon 21 Aug
Time: 8pm - 9.30pm
Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Rm

MINISTRY RECRUITMENT FAIR

God has blessed each of us with gifts, whether you have a talent for music/teaching, a passion for outreach, or a desire to pray for others, there is a ministry waiting for you! Our fair will provide you the perfect opportunity to explore the various ministries we offer and find a meaningful way to serve our community. Come meet our volunteers and learn more about how your unique gifts can make a difference. The fair will be held outside JPPI Hall with the following ministries:

Sat 19 Aug, 5.30pm

1. Catechetical Ministry
2. Liturgical Music Ministry
3. Legion of Mary

Sun 20 Aug

1. Catechetical Ministry (All Masses)
2. Liturgical Music Ministry (All Masses)
3. Society of St Vincent de Paul (9am & 11am Masses)
4. Intercessory Prayer Ministry (9am & 11am Masses)

LA SALLE HOUSE - A FORMATION CENTRE RUN BY DE LA SALLE BROTHERS: PARENTING PRE-TEENS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

For young parents (with children 12 years & below) to help them review their parenting skills and learn valuable tips to impact positively on the growth of their children.

Date: Sat 9 Sep 2023
Time: 9.30am - 12pm
Venue: La Salle House (490 East Coast Road, Singapore 429058)
Register: <https://tinyurl.com/2jxu873t>



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

Come join LiFE as we continue with Session 3 of this six-part video series exploring 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: 25 Aug - 15 Sep
(Every Friday) except 1 Sep
Time: 8pm - 9.30pm
Venue: JPPI Hall
Enquiries: Desmond, 9011 5076

CENACLE SISTERS: REST, RELISH & RECHARGE! (4D3N BEACH RETREAT)

Open to all above 21 years old. Feeling tired from work, daily routines and ministry? Almost at the brink of burn-out yet having nowhere safe to go? Let us go to a quiet place and rest in the Lord. This retreat is suitable for active servers and/or those taking a break from ministry to grow & deepen our relationship with self and with God. Accompanied by Sr. Kriz & team, through an arrangement of leisure activities, these days of reflection and prayer hope to find God in all things & time.

Dates: 21 - 24 Sep 2023 (Thurs - Sun)
Venue: Bintan (exact location to be confirmed)
Orientation date (compulsory attendance): 10 Sep, 2pm - 530pm
Register: <https://forms.gle/C55r12smvZ1XMYab9>



PIETA SINGAPORE: AUGUST MONTHLY SESSION

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents who have united in faith to seek God's comfort, wisdom and hope. The monthly session, run by bereaved parents, is for prayer, reflection and the breaking open of 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 journey together in faith.

Date: Tue 22 August 2023
Time: 7.30pm - 9.15pm
Venue: Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre (2 Highland Road, unit LG-01, Singapore 549102)

MONTFORTIAN EXPERIENCE RETREAT: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

To grieve is not about forgetting but remembering the losses in our lives. To be able to mourn is a great gift from God. This retreat will be a sacred time and healing space to understand and work at our Losses in Life, for blessed are those who mourn.

Dates: 8-10 Sep 2023
Venue: Montfort Centre (624 Upper Bukit Timah Rd)
Register: www.montfortcentre.org/events-1/blessed-are-those-who-mourn-2023

CATECHETICAL AWARENESS WEEKEND 2023: *Growing Faith - Discern His Call*

In line with OFC's catechetical theme of the year, this year's theme focuses on inspiring a new generation of catechists to discern their mission in accompanying children and youth to "mature in the Christian life and journey toward God" (Directory for Catechesis, 113c). Here are some testimonies from our fellow catechists:

Why Be A Catechist?

Janice: I was amazed when I first heard this by Pope Benedict: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but an encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive decision." It opened my eyes to how my faith is an encounter with a living God, and a desire stirred in me to deepen my relationship with Him through the faith that was passed down to me by echoing it to others.

Francesca: I actually said "No" to this call twice. It was on the third call that I decided "Why not?". I have been following Penny's journey since post-covid, and I'm in class with her every week. So on the third try of the facilitators, I decided to give it a shot. And it was also a way for me to spend some extra time with her, and also to increase my own knowledge as we prepare for each class.

Colin: I was first being nudged by one of the catechists to consider returning, and seeing there is a need for catechists, I sensed it's time for me to be involved in this ministry again, after a long break from the catechetical ministry.

Vanessa: My husband and I want to be catechists here in Singapore because our daughter's journey in faith has inspired us to be actively involved in her spiritual development. Having come from the Philippines where Catholicism is often inherited, the new experience of having catechism on Sundays is both exciting and challenging.

Karen: I started out as a catechist during the Covid epidemic when lessons were on Zoom. I was already tutoring using that platform as well as accompanying my then L2 daughter. At that time, I saw the need as many were unfamiliar and so I responded accordingly.



Francesca Khor, L1



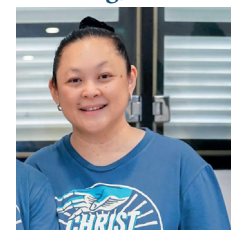
Janice Toh, KI



Colin Sng, L7



Karen Ho, L4



Vanessa Lara, L6

Discern Your Call, be a Catechist

Catechesis is not just about sacramental preparation for Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation; it seeks to put the person not only in touch but in an intimate communion with Jesus Christ (Pope John Paul II on Catechesis in Our Time (CT), #5) so that as a disciple of Christ, one becomes more like Him (CT 20).

The role of the catechist, assistant and facilitator then is as a 'steward of the mystery' (1 Cor 4:1), facilitating the candidate's encounter with Jesus and His Church as there is "only one Teacher, the Christ." (Mt 23:10).

What keeps you motivated?

Janice: Experiences of surprise when I see God stirring in the children's hearts. It inspires me to remember that we're all made for God and that we're all children of God.

Francesca: The kids grew on me! They keep me going with their ongoing questions and some of these questions sometimes throw us off. Seven-year-olds can sometimes teach you simple ways of their interpretations and it's been a joy to see these kids every week.

Colin: The joy of sharing the faith with the teens excites me. This is especially so when I spend time preparing, and I'm filled with ideas (by the grace of the Holy Spirit), on how to present and share the faith with the teens.

Vanessa: To stay motivated, witnessing our daughter and other children grow in faith is immensely fulfilling. Also knowing that God is with us every step of the way gives us encouragement.

Karen: It's a privilege to be able to accompany the children on their faith journey especially as we prepare them to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. We are the instruments for the children to encounter Jesus personally, placing them in contact with Him.

Read more on sfxchurch.sg

For further enquiries, come visit our booth outside JPPII Hall after Mass!



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

Lay Apostolate Sunday

"Every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal' (Eph. 4:7)."

Lay Apostolate Sunday holds a significant place in the Catholic calendar as it highlights the role and importance of the laity in sharing their faith with others. It serves as a reminder that every baptized Catholic has a unique calling to be an active participant in spreading the Gospel message and building up the Kingdom of God in our world today.

As Catholics, we are called to share our faith in various ways, both through our words and actions. Here are a few ways in which we can effectively share our faith:



1 Be an Authentic Witness: Our lives should reflect the teachings of Christ. By living out our faith with authenticity and integrity, we become a living testimony to the transformative power of God's love.



2 Build Relationships: Develop genuine relationships with others, both within and outside the Church. Through these relationships, we can create opportunities for dialogue, listening, and sharing our experiences of encountering Christ.



3 Share Personal Testimonies: Each of us has a unique story of God's grace in our lives. By openly sharing our testimonies, especially during small group discussions or gatherings, we can inspire and encourage others to seek a deeper relationship with God.



4 Engage in Works of Mercy: By actively participating in acts of service and charity, we demonstrate God's love in practical ways. Acts of kindness, compassion, and charity not only help those in need but also allow us to bear witness to our faith.



5 Invite and Accompany: Simply inviting others to Mass, prayer groups, or other faith-based events can have a significant impact. Additionally, offering to accompany someone on their faith journey, answering their questions, and walking alongside them can foster an environment of growth and learning.



6 Utilise Social Media: In this digital age, social media platforms provide a unique opportunity to reach out to others and share our faith. By posting uplifting content, sharing Bible verses, or providing resources for spiritual growth, we can engage with a wider audience and foster meaningful conversations.

It is important to remember that sharing our faith is not about forcing our beliefs onto others but rather providing an invitation for them to encounter Christ. By engaging in the lay apostolate, each one of us can play a crucial role in bringing others closer to the love and mercy of God. On Lay Apostolate Sunday, let us renew our commitment to sharing our faith and continue to support and encourage one another in our journey of discipleship. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we strive to be faithful witnesses of Christ's love in the world.

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