



Disciples
Making Disciples



Parish Office:
6280 6076, secretariat@sfxchurch.sg



Parish Priest:
Rev Fr Benedict Chng
6288 0484
benedict.chng@catholic.org.sg



Little Shepherds' SchoolHouse@St Francis Xavier:
6011 1076, lss-cosfx.admin@catholicpreschool.edu.sg

Assistant Priest:
Rev Fr Nathaniel Xavier
6280 8331
xavier.nathaniel@catholic.org.sg

Like Christ – Forgive Infinitely

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
17 Sep 2023

Sir 27:30-28-7
Rom 14:7-9
Mt 18:21-35

In today's Gospel, Peter asks the Lord how often one must forgive. Our Lord tells him to forgive infinitely and uses the famous parable to remind him of where the source of all forgiveness comes.

Forgiving all degrees of hurts, no matter who the perpetrator, no matter how often, is a tough and often impossible act to follow. Only God is able to do this. The teaching here, however, is that we are to follow this tough act to the end, because that is what God unceasingly offers us in our repentance, and because it would be an eternally regrettable mistake if we don't. The parable of the unforgiving servant is about us. We have accrued so much sin, we could never pay off the debt of our sins. But God forgives us through Jesus when we ask for mercy. Yet we hang on to petty anger and grudges towards others.

The sum the first servant owed is so monumental that forgiveness becomes a matter of trust on the part of the master. That is how God is with us. But we squander that trust when we in turn do not forgive others.

In the Our Father, when we pray "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", we are also implicitly agreeing to the inverse - that if we do not forgive others, God will also not forgive us. It is when our hearts are closed to

forgiving others, that it is also closed to God's mercy. That is why God's forgiveness cannot reach us. When we are unable to forgive others, we shackle ourselves in a spiritual debtor's prison, from which we will never emerge, unless we learn to forgive. That is what hell is.

Dying on the cross, Jesus' mercy overflowed, but our hearts often refuse even a drop of mercy for others who hurt us. This is precisely what the Lord is comparing when he cites the example of 10,000 talents versus 100 denarii owed, as well as the respective forgiveness and vengeance exacted.

This world demands justice for wrongdoings, but the kingdom of God, where we belong, expects something purer from us in the form of mercy. As citizens of God's kingdom, we must behave in a way that authentically reflects who we are – children set apart for him and created after his image and likeness.

Jesus' words in the Gospel echo Sirach's in the first reading, which urges the reader not to be angry, but to leave vengeance to God, so that God will be merciful to us too. Indeed, Jesus didn't come to abolish Old Testament teaching, but to fulfil it.

Psalm 102 exults that it is when we imitate God in forgiveness and kindness, when we are slow to anger and abounding in mercy, that we are like him, because God chooses to be revealed in his mercy, not power and majesty.

St Paul says that we live and die for Christ. He is our King in Heaven, on earth and under the earth. It is to Christ's monarchy that we belong, not the temporal democracy we live in. So, when we disavow ourselves of the King's commands to live for others as

he does, we can expect to be cast out of his kingdom.

We will never come close to God's level of mercy. But having experienced the lavish mercy of God, we should be quick to forgive others, so as to be God-like, since forgiveness is a divine attribute.

"For us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully." (Pope Francis, *The Face of Mercy*)

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, forgiveness turns the bitterness of sin into grace. In the depths of our hearts, if we can offer the hurt we remember to the Holy Spirit, he can turn it into intercession and blessing. We don't have to like our transgressors, but we ought to love and pray for them. Prayer is a work of mercy, and love is willing the good of another. (cf CCC 2843)



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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



CHARISMATIC - GROWTH SERIES

The next Charismatic Prayer session is on **Mon 18 Sep, 8pm** at **SFX Auditorium (Parish Centre, Level 3)**. There will be Praise & Worship followed by a talk on 'Gifts of the Holy Spirit on Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues & Prophecy' by Jessica Francisco/ Gerard Francisco. All are welcome!

INTERCESSORY

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

Date: Mon 18 Sep

Time: 8pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Rm

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.

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION @ SFX

Come celebrate Children's Day @ SFX on Sun 1 Oct 2023. There will be games, face painting, balloons and especially our first Book Swap Extravaganza! Bring a book, take a book! Trade your well-loved titles for a fresh read.

Date: Sun 1 Oct 2023

Time: 8am - 1pm

Venue: Plaza (Outside JPIL Hall)

FR BEN AWAY

Please note that Fr Benedict will be away for a pilgrimage from **15 - 29 Sep**.

BAT: A CATHOLIC VIEW OF THE END TIMES

What do the Bible and the Catholic Church teach about the End of Time? The Catholic Church has very explicit teachings about the Tribulation, the Antichrist, the Second Coming and the New Creation.

If you have ever wondered about where this world is heading and what the ultimate destiny of humanity is, come join the Biblical Apostolate Team (BAT) for this 5-part series of talks, based on the work of Dr Brant Pitre, and get answers to questions such as:

- What is the meaning of Jesus' prophecies of tribulation and the coming of the Son of Man? Are we in the "end times" now?
- Why did Jesus prophesy the destruction of the Temple and how does it relate to the end of the world?
- Is the Protestant belief in a secret "Rapture" a biblical teaching or a false doctrine?
- What will the Final Judgement be like and how will we be judged?

Dates: 17 Sep, 24 Sep, 1 Oct, 8 Oct & 15 Oct (Sundays)

Time: 9am - 10.30am

Venue: Jeremiah Room (Parish Centre, Level 2)

Register: bit.ly/EndTimes2023Register



FACILITATING SMALL BIBLE SHARING GROUPS

The Church of St Francis Xavier in association with ABA (Archdiocesan Biblical Apostolate) is organising a course in Facilitating Small Bible Groups. While primarily focused on Bible group sharing, it is also open to all members of parish ministries in the Archdiocese who are involved in, or wish to get involved in facilitating groups.

Date: Sat 30 Sep 2023

Time: 9am - 5pm
(Lunch included)

Venue: JPIL Hall

Register:

<https://bit.ly/FSBG20230930Register>
(Registration closes on 23 Sep, 12pm)



CHRIST@WORK X YOUNG STEWARDS CONFERENCE 2023

In the spirit of One Church, Catholic Business Network (CBN) and Catholic Foundation (CF) are excited to bring you the joint Christ@Work and Young Stewards Conference on the theme "Joy at Work; Work in Love". The conference will conclude with sunset Mass celebrated by H.E. Marek Zalewski, Apostolic Nuncio to Singapore, with Fr Colin Tan, SJ as concelebrant. Come visit us after mass outside JPIL Hall or visit www.cbn.sg for more information.

Date & Time: Sat 14 Oct, 9am - 6pm

Cost: \$35

Venue: St. Joseph's Institution
(38 Malcolm Road, S308274)

Register: www.bit.ly/cwysc23

ACMI MIGRANT SUNDAY 2023 FOOD & FUNFAIR

All are welcome! Be part of this joyous celebration that recognises the remarkable contributions of our migrant brothers and sisters here in Singapore. Experience the different cultures through food, performances and hear unique stories that enrich our cultural landscape.

Date: Sun 24 Sep 2023

Time: 8.30am - 1pm

Venue: St Joseph's Church (620 Upper Bukit Timah Rd, Singapore 678116)

PARISH RECOLLECTION: WHERE ARE YOU? (GEN 3:9)

In the Book of Genesis, we are reminded of a profound question that God asks Adam and Eve: "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). This question, though directed at our first ancestors, continues to echo through the ages, reaching our hearts today.

In our busy lives, it is easy to lose sight of where we truly are in relation to God. We can become preoccupied with worldly concerns, distractions, and responsibilities that pull us away from our spiritual journey. Yet, God's question resonates with a gentle invitation to pause, reflect, and reorient ourselves towards Him. Come and find rest in the Lord for a time of input, reflection and prayer. Registration closes on Fri 13 Oct. Sign up now!

Dates: 20 - 22 Oct (Non Stay-in)

Speaker: Deacon Sherman Kuek

Cost: \$50

Venue: SFX Auditorium

Register: tinyurl.com/SFXRecollection2023

RCIY RETREAT

“Zacchaeus, Come Down From that Tree”

Over a recent weekend, 15 youths attended their first RCIY retreat held on SFX parish grounds. Based on the gospel account of the meeting of Zacchaeus with Jesus, the youth were introduced to the significance of our personal identity as children of God, and invited to respond to the Lord's invitation to have a relationship with Him.

Through a series of presentations, reflections, prayer, para-liturgies, small group sharings, praise and worship, the inquirers explored various themes in the story. They were introduced to Jesus and His heart of compassion and love for all, especially those rejected by society. The youth recognized how, like Zacchaeus, they are often given labels and led to believe that they are not good enough or worthy of God's love. The sessions focused on opening the inquirers' hearts to a deeper awareness of their true identity as precious sons and daughters of God and the truth that they are loved deeply and unconditionally for who they are, regardless of their past or present circumstances.

It was beautiful to witness the softening of hearts and heartening to hear their testimonies at the closing of the camp. Here are some testimonies:

I have recently been questioning if I really wish to be confirmed next year as I didn't feel much of a connection with God. This camp made me realise I do want to stay in this church for a very long time ... and yes, I want to be confirmed! I still don't quite trust or love God as fully as I should - but I am definitely on my way there!! - **Kayla, 15**

There are friends out here for me that I didn't even realise. God is saying to me – “Live. Laugh. Love!” The camp has been a good adventure – being by myself is not as fun as being with others. I see great things happening from small beginnings. - **Nathanael, 18**

I have had some previous exposure to Christianity but got a bit lost – felt maybe it wasn't what I wanted. This weekend has allowed me to search my heart again and the answer is a small 'yes' to continuing – a slow but good start to resuming the journey of seeking God. - **En Lih, 22**



Some participants who had arrived on Friday evening feeling anxious, distracted by personal issues, or laden with expectations of a boring and heavy, 'prayer intensive' weekend were thankful in the end that they had come. In the words of one, "I felt relief when I stepped into church;" another decided to shift her attention to 'just being with God' while a third said 'the door of (my) heart opened and I let Jesus in.'

We give God our grateful thanks for everything He has done for our young inquirers and to members of 1Cor12 who came and led us in praise and worship. We are grateful also to the intercessory teams and parishioners for their prayer support that carried us this far. Please continue to keep RCIY (& RCIA) in prayer as they continue to journey towards the Rite of Acceptance in October.



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

The BAT Ministry

St Jerome famously stated that "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." Therefore what can Catholics do to try and understand scripture better and not stay ignorant? Join our talks and courses organised by the BAT Ministry and open your eyes and heart to what our Lord wants to teach you.

Our **BAT (Biblical Apostolate Team)** in SFX offers several programmes during the year, so that the faithful may better pray with, share and live the Word of God, and witness to the Gospel. We strive to cultivate a personal encounter with Christ through some of these activities.

Due to the Covid-19 situation, many BAT programmes had to switch to online platforms. Though meeting online is not as conducive for forming community, there were advantages especially for those with limited mobility or limited time due to family or work commitments. As such, for the year 2023, BAT decided to offer a hybrid programme of both online and face-to-face programmes.

Some of the talks that were organised this year were on:

- **A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion, a Lenten Journey in 5 sessions**
- **Why Catholics Believe What We Believe, 8 sessions on Catholic Apologetics**

Both of these were held in-person on Sunday mornings.

The series of 8 talks on Catholic Apologetics was organised with the objective of helping Catholics to answer common objections to Catholic beliefs and practices. As such, questions that were raised were "tackled" or answered by some BAT members. Sharing these questions and answers with course participants enabled the community to learn in greater depth.

The **Great Adventure Bible Timeline**, an online bible study programme with a few in-person sessions is also ongoing at the moment. Most of the sessions for this course are held online **every Wed evening from 8pm to 9.30pm**.

To close off the year, there will be a 5-session talk on **A Catholic View of the End Times**, starting soon on **17 Sep**, to be held in **St Jeremiah Room in SFX** from **9am to 10.30am**.

So come join us and fall deeper in love with our Lord.

Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence

– 1 Peter 3:15 RSVCE



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