



THE MANNA

Church of St Francis Xavier

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Disciples
Making Disciples



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The Call of Salvation

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
24 Sep 2023

Is 55:6-9
Ph 1:20-24, 27a
Mt 20:1-16a

In order to better appreciate today's gospel reading, it is useful to note that Jesus had just finished advising the Rich Young Man to sell his possessions, give to the poor and follow Jesus in order to have eternal life. Jesus also promised that those who detach themselves of earthly possessions for his name's sake will receive two things in heaven - a return of a hundredfold for sacrifices made and eternal life (Mt 19:16-29). Immediately after this, Jesus describes what the kingdom of heaven is like, which is today's gospel reading.

Once again, Jesus uses the imagery of a vineyard to describe the kingdom of heaven. This imagery would be a familiar one for his audience as it is alluded to in both the Old (Isa 5:1-7) and New Testament (Mk 12:1-10, Lk 13:6-9, Jn 15:1-5). Hence, God would be the landowner who owns the vineyard, going out into the world, represented by the "marketplace", to call labourers to his vineyard. The labourers represent, firstly the house of Israel in the old covenant, and then Gentiles like all of us. The fact that God goes looking for labourers "at daybreak" (Mt 20:1) means he had been doing so ever since Adam and Eve fell from grace into sin. From Noah, Abraham, Issac to the twelve tribes of Israel, God had never ceased

to gather people to himself in his kingdom. Even today, at the eleventh hour, God continues to call us, gentile labourers, into his vineyard which represents his church.

The evening of the day when work stops represents the end of time, when the bailiff which represents Jesus, will "render to every man according to his works" (Rom 2:6). However, to our human sense of justice and fairness and in light of Rom 2:6, the fact that the labourers called at the eleventh hour get the same wage of a denarius as those who came in at daybreak, does not seem fair. Perhaps we could even be excused if we too sided with the early labourers who "grumbled at the landowner" (Mt 20:11). It was St Augustine who explained that the wage of one denarius represents the gift of eternal life in the vineyard of God. So all who are called and have laboured in the vineyard regardless of whether they are called early or late, receive the same wage - eternal life with the Father! As Jesus described in the Parable of the Sower (Lk 8:4-15) and the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-29), according to what each has done in God's house, some will get greater rewards and others less, but all shall have the "one denarius" of eternal life.

Our gospel reading today allows us a glimpse of God's infinite goodness and mercy to all those who respond to his call. It is immaterial whether we are called at the "eleventh hour" of our lives or early at the daybreak of our birth, God's generosity is infinite and his blessings are specifically tailored to our needs. Our good works within the vineyard of God, are a response to God's gracious call and invitation to do his will, but they are not a means of earning salvation. Our

justification comes from the grace of God, "the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life" (CCC1996). All who respond to his grace, stepping into the vineyard with the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5, 16:26), are made righteous by this grace and receive the fullness of eternal life (CCC2008).

Respond to God's call we must, but we must "seek Yahweh while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near" (Is 55:6). This is the exhortation of Isaiah in our first reading today, because "death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ" (CCC1021). Therefore, whatever the hour of our life may be, let us heed St Paul's words in the second reading, that by the grace of God, let our manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, standing firm in one spirit and one mind striving for the faith of the gospel. This will be a sure sign from God that we will be saved (Ph 1:27-28).



"Seek Yahweh while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near."
(Is 55:6)

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 25 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 Faith, Healing & Miracles' by Jessica Francisco/ Gerard Francisco. All are welcome!

INTERCESSORY

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

Date: Mon 25 Sep

Time: 8pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Mount Tabor Adoration Rm

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION @ SFX

Come celebrate Children's Day @ SFX on Sun 1 Oct 2023. There will be games, facepainting, balloons and our very 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)

LIFE MINISTRY: REBORN - YOU, YOUR CHILD AND THE HEART OF BAPTISM

Explore the profound effects and mission of the Sacrament of Baptism through a three-part video series with LiFE. Examine the essential role of Baptism in God's salvation plan and discover your baptismal calling to share in the mission of Christ to which all the baptised are called.

Dates: 27 Oct, 3 Nov, 10 Nov (Fridays)

Time: 8pm - 9.30pm

Venue: JPIL Hall

Enquiries: Contact Desmond (9011 5076)

FR BEN AWAY

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

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 or scan the QR code



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: VERSATILE TOOLS BY FR DAVID GARCIA, OP

What does it mean when the Church says work has dignity? Why is it a problem when managers micromanage their staff? Why do persons with and without intellectual disabilities have equal dignity? What is the problem with both capitalism and communism? What is our duty to the poor and the environment? Why does the Church prefer democracy? Jesus challenges us in the gospel to interpret the signs of the times. Come and turn to the Church's social teachings so we can obtain the tools to think about today's challenges for the Church and the wider society we live in! For enquiries, please email Caritas Singapore at mpmc@caritas-singapore.org

Dates: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Nov (Thursdays)

Time: 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Venue: CANA at Catholic Centre
(55 Waterloo Street, Level 3)

Fee: \$50

Register: <https://shorturl.at/kxP16>



PIETA SINGAPORE - SEPTEMBER MONTHLY ZOOM SESSION

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents 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. Our next session is on **Tue 26 Sep, 7.30pm to 9.15pm**. If you wish to join, please email pieta.singapore@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Receiving their First Holy Communion

On 10 September, 51 children from L3 received the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. The First Holy Communion was a very significant occasion for them as they experienced receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. Parents, relatives and godparents were present to support and witness this. It was a very proud moment for all who were present.

Our L3 brothers and sisters share their reflections and thanksgiving:



First Holy Communion! Wow! I want to thank all catechists (especially my mum) for helping us prepare for this special day! I am so grateful that I can receive the Body and Blood of Christ! I love Jesus! - **Dana**

I feel happy after receiving Holy Communion. - **Chloe**

Thanks to our catechists. I appreciate that they guided us and told us what to do. The First Holy Communion was an exciting occasion. I am happy to have received Holy Communion with my family at Mass. - **Andrea**

I was so happy and proud to receive my First Holy Communion and to be asked to read part of the Prayers of the Faithful. I wanted to make God proud of me by reciting the prayers flawlessly but I was so sad that I made a mistake! Dad and Auntie Constance comforted me. I was really excited to taste the wine during Holy Communion! - **Léa**

I felt very happy to be able to receive Holy Communion. For us, it was a real miracle because my family members were sick from COVID just two weeks before. I was very sick as well and I was suspected to have dengue. I felt God's work at hand here that we managed to get well in time for my First Holy Communion. - **Tessa**

I did not understand what the fuss was about but when I dressed up, my grandma and aunts praised me for looking nice and grown up. I felt happy. When I received my First Holy Communion, I felt special and connected to Jesus. I tried to be a good boy that day as I felt Jesus was in me. - **Tate**

My parents and grandparents praised me and said that I looked smart. When I received my First Holy Communion, I felt closer to Jesus and that Jesus was in me. - **Emmanuel**

The feeling was special and I felt Jesus close to me! It was a holy and joyous occasion. - **Karl**

I could feel Jesus inside of me. I felt his love. - **Ramon**

I was feeling quite scared at first but when I received my First Holy Communion, I felt safe and happy. Thank you to my catechists who helped us prepare for this special day. - **Ara**

Happy to receive Christ into my life. May he guide and bless me everyday. Amen. - **Elizabeth**

I felt great happiness to be able to receive my First Holy Communion. - **Chloe**

At first, I was nervous as I was afraid I might do something wrong during Mass. After receiving my First Holy Communion, I felt over the moon as I am finally able to receive the Body of Christ. - **Trisha**

I really felt good because Jesus was inside me. I think I should be good because Jesus is with me. - **Markieff**



Looking for more Information?
visit www.sfxchurch.sg

Life In The Spirit Seminar



This year, the Life In The Spirit Seminar (LISS) was themed "Jumpstart", being the very first LISS post-Covid. The seminar had 54 participants who attended the sessions on Mondays from 3 July to 11 September. It brought together various ministries within the Parish to work as one community. Organised by the SFX Charismatic Prayer Group, it was supported by the Wardens Ministry, the Intercessory Prayer Ministry and the 1Cor12 Community.

The speakers shared profound insights on self-awareness, spiritual growth and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Attendees left equipped with practical tools to lead a purpose-driven life, guided by the divine gifts within. The heartfelt group sharing and testimonies fuelled spiritual growth and connected like-minded souls. The highlight of the seminar was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit where all attendees were prayed over by the facilitators and most of them were blessed with the experience of a unique spiritual gift. The seminar ended with Mass celebrated by Fr Nathaniel and a commissioning of the attendees followed by a potluck fellowship.

We thank God and extend our heartfelt gratitude to Fr Benedict, Fr Nathaniel and everyone who made this LISS a remarkable journey into the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here are some testimonies:

"During the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, I was touched and over-powered by the Holy Spirit. I felt that God is reaching out to me from the heavens and I was filled with immense joy beyond description." - Participant

This is my first time joining LISS. The experience was out of this world that I just cannot express in words. It's a special feeling which I'm sure is the work of the Holy Spirit. He just leaves you speechless, feeling all brand new. - Padmini VS

"I was feeling physically exhausted for the past weeks and kept yawning non-stop during the sessions. Through the course of LISS, I slowly began to experience the stress and tension being released from my body. I felt more energetic and I slept well too. Praise the Lord." - Catherine

This is my first time attending LISS in Singapore and I find myself much more confident to share my testimony with everyone. I feel love, joy, and happiness and look forward to continue my journey with Charismatic group. - Joyce

On the day of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as I sat down to pray and reflect after our group leader's reminder, I felt a sense of unworthiness as I reflected on my careless past and felt remorseful that I have not done enough e.g. to be a more prayerful and giving person etc. I told the Lord that I was sorry and I know within that I am not worthy to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. I began to read the scripture for that day and was comforted when it said 'The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word!' (Acts 10:44-48). After the scripture reading and reflection, I felt a sense of peace! After LISS, I am more determined to keep close to our Blessed Lord and Blessed Mother Mary. I desire to practice my prayer life more fervently. - Carol

Opening Hours

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

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.



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If you're interested in content curation and design layout, contact mmm@sfxchurch.sg