



**Disciples**  
*Making Disciples*



**Parish Office:**  
6280 6076, [secretariat@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:secretariat@sfxchurch.sg)



**Parish Priest:**  
Rev Fr Benedict Chng  
6288 0484  
[benedict.chng@catholic.org.sg](mailto:benedict.chng@catholic.org.sg)



**Little Shepherds' SchoolHouse@St Francis Xavier:**  
6011 1076, [lss-cosfx.admin@catholicpreschool.edu.sg](mailto:lss-cosfx.admin@catholicpreschool.edu.sg)

**Assistant Priest:**  
Rev Fr Edward Lim  
6282 3151  
[frelim@catholic.org.sg](mailto:frelim@catholic.org.sg)

## Not Fast... Not Feast... But Hope

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
3 Dec 2023

Is 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8  
1 Cor 1:3-9  
Mk 13:33-37

Advent used to be called St Martin's Lent or the Nativity Fast with fasting three times a week from 11 November (St Martin's Feast) until Christmas as the norm. Pope St Gregory the Great later shortened the fast to four weeks to differentiate Advent from the forty days of Lent. Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the penitential character of Advent has been accompanied by an eschatological hope. We are encouraged to strive to present ourselves worthily as people chosen by God and "joined... to his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:9) on judgement day. This communion with Christ is most perfectly effected in the Eucharist, "the source and summit of the Christian life" (CCC 1324). Advent is thus also a time of preparation for Christ's Second Coming or his Parousia – the day of the final or general judgement (CCC 1038).

While many of us may deeply desire a spiritual transformation this Advent, our work culture may demand that we feast and network to capitalise on the merriment stirred up by advertisers. This often conflicts with the silence, prayer and contemplation needed to enter interiorly where the Spirit awaits our presence, an attentive ear and an open heart. We should strive to free ourselves from some engagements so as to preserve this sacred time with our Lord and experience anew the hope, peace, joy and love that he has promised us.

On this First Sunday of Advent, the Church invites us to focus on Hope. We may be hoping to stop the wars that are being fought or the increase in human trafficking or modern slavery but where do we start and can the Christian understanding of Hope be of service to every single conflict and despair?

In his encyclical on the theological virtue of Hope, Pope Benedict XVI (whose first death anniversary we will commemorate on December 31), pointed out that Jesus brought hope to the world not through "social revolution like... Spartacus" or "political liberation like Barabbas" but through "something totally different: an encounter with the Lord of all lords, an encounter with the living God and thus an encounter with a hope stronger than the sufferings of slavery, a hope which therefore transformed life and the world from within... Even if external structures remained unaltered." (*Spe Salvi*, Saved in Hope 4)

Humanity truly encountered "the living God" some 2000 years ago when Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, became incarnate and was born into the world through our Blessed Mother. The Incarnation answered the cry in today's first reading for God to "tear the heavens open and come down" (Isa 63:19). In encountering God through Christ, "the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us [and] there

lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us ... enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God." (*Ibid* 47)

The Corinthian community experienced this intimate encounter with God and were praised by St Paul for continuing to manifest "the gifts of the Spirit" (1 Cor 1:7) and for building each other up in faith as they looked forward to only one event – and perhaps the most important event for every human being – "for the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:8).

Jesus urged us to live in such watchfulness in today's gospel. He tells us to "stay awake" (Mk 13:33, 35, 37) for "you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn..." (Mk 13:35)

Let us set out this Advent with the right disposition of anticipating in faith and hope, Christ's final return and judgement. As we are also celebrating the Feast of St Francis Xavier this weekend, let us be zealous for Christ as he was and hope in Christ's mercy and grace as he did:

"O Jesus Christ my Redeemer, and from thy divine mercy, I hope that through Thy merits, assisted by Thy grace, I corresponding to this grace by good works, and fulfilling the precepts of Thy holy law, I shall one day come into the glory and happiness for which Thou has pleased to create and call me. Amen."



**Jesus brought hope to the world ... through "something totally different: ... an encounter with the living God and thus an encounter with a hope ... which transformed life and the world from within... Even if external structures remained unaltered."**  
- Pope Benedict XVI

## 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)



## SSVP COLLECTION

There will be a second collection by Society of St Vincent De Paul this weekend to help the poor and needy in monthly rations and other aid programmes. SSVP members will be at the atrium area. Please give generously. For cheque payments or PayNow, pay to:

**Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP)**

- OCBC Bank Account No: 686 596 768 001
- PayNow UEN: S61SS0149B

## INTERCESSORY

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

**Date:** Mon 4 Dec  
**Time:** 8pm - 9.30pm  
**Venue:** Mount Tabor Adoration Rm

## THE EMMANUEL EXPERIENCE: CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Join us for "The Emmanuel Experience" at the Auditorium this Christmas Season! Our Music Ministry will be staging 2 performances of Christmas carols. Bring a non-Christian friend and let them experience the joy and wonder of Christmas through music. Don't miss this opportunity to spread the message of love and hope. For further enquiries, please contact the Parish Office to find out more.

**Sat 16 Dec, 7.30pm:**  
***Emmanuel: Come  
Let us Worship***  
by St Augustine Music Ministry



[tinyurl.com/SammChristmasConcert](http://tinyurl.com/SammChristmasConcert)

**Sat 23 Dec, 8pm:**  
***Enter His Presence***  
by the SFX Youth Choir



[tinyurl.com/SFXYConcert2023](http://tinyurl.com/SFXYConcert2023)



## Blessed Feast Day!

Our Parish Priests and staff would like to wish all our parishioners a blessed & joyous Feast Day! We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all volunteers who have helped to make our Triduum and Feast Day celebration a fruitful event.

## ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICES IN SERANGOON DISTRICT

- Fri 15 Dec, 8pm - Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Mon 18 Dec, 8pm - Church of the Transfiguration
- Tue 19 Dec, 8pm - Church of The Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Wed 20 Dec, 8.30pm - St Anne's Church
- **Thu 21 Dec, 8pm - Church of St Francis Xavier**
- Fri 22 Dec, 8pm - Church of St. Vincent de Paul

## ADVENT PRAYER TREE

What better idea than to give someone in need the gift of intentional prayer this Christmas? Just as we did last year, think of someone to pray for - either to return to Church or be open to knowing the Lord. The prayer tags will be available for you to write your prayers and hang onto our Advent trees. **As a community of faith, we will pray for all these intentions throughout Advent.**

| <b>CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY MASS SCHEDULE</b>   |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Christmas Eve (Sun 24 Dec)</b>  | <b>Christmas Day (Mon 25 Dec)</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children's Pageant: <b>8.30pm</b> (livestreamed)</li><li>• Vigil Mass: <b>9pm</b></li><li>• Midnight Mass/Mass during the Night: <b>12am</b></li></ul> | 9am, 11am, 4pm                    |

## SFX CHRISTMAS PAGEANT RECRUITMENT

The Children's Liturgy Ministry is calling upon both the young and the young-at-heart to take part in this beautiful celebration. Our enchanting Christmas Eve Pageant will unfold on **Sun 24 Dec** at **8.30pm**. Let us all come together to make this Christmas truly magical! Scan the QR Code or sign up at [tinyurl.com/SFXPageant2023](http://tinyurl.com/SFXPageant2023).



Practices will be on **11 Dec, 13 Dec, 18 Dec and 20 Dec (Full Dress Rehearsal)** from **8pm to 10pm**. For enquiries, please contact Cathie at 9846 1199.

## FEAST OF ST FRANCIS XAVIER (DEC 3): CRUCIFIX CRAB PLUSHIE COLLECTION



We would like to thank all our children for using their God-given gifts so enthusiastically! Your completed word quizzes and beautifully drawn and coloured pictures of our Patron Saint, St Francis Xavier, are now on display with the exhibition on St Francis Xavier outside the JPII Hall. You may collect your Crucifix Crab Plushie from St Jerome Library after Mass starting from this weekend.

## APPEAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID FOR GAZA CRISIS

Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives, Singapore (CHARIS) is making an appeal for those affected by the conflict in Gaza and the surrounding region. You can donate in the following manner:

- Via credit card or PayNow through the CHARIS website.
- Send a crossed cheque payable to "Humanitarian Aid Fund", indicate "Humanitarian Aid to Gaza" at the back of the cheque to: CHARIS, 55 Waterloo Street, #07-02, Catholic Centre, Singapore 187954.



Please contact CHARIS at 6337 4119 or scan the QR code to visit their website for more information.



## *St. Francis Xavier: His Life and What We Can Learn from Him*

**St. Francis Xavier**, a revered Catholic missionary and co-founder of the Society of Jesus, continues to inspire and guide us through his remarkable life of devotion and service. As we reflect on his life, let us delve into the lessons we can learn from this great saint and apply them to our lives.

Born in 1506 in Navarre, Spain, St. Francis Xavier exhibited a deep sense of faith and a burning desire to bring the Gospel to the farthest corners of the world. He travelled extensively, spreading Christianity in India, Sri Lanka, Japan, and other regions of Asia. Despite facing numerous challenges, including language barriers and resistance to the faith, he tirelessly worked towards establishing vibrant Christian communities.

One key lesson we can draw from St. Francis Xavier's life is his unwavering commitment to evangelisation. He recognised the importance of reaching out to those who had not yet encountered the love of Christ. We too can embrace this spirit by actively engaging with one another, demonstrating Christ's love through acts of kindness, and inviting others to experience the joy of belonging to God's family.

St. Francis Xavier also exemplified a deep sense of compassion and empathy. He cared for the physical and spiritual well-being of those he served, meeting their

needs with kindness and humility. It is a reminder for all of us to be attentive and responsive to the needs of others. Through our parish communities/ministries, we can extend a helping hand to the marginalized, support those facing challenges, and offer consolation to the grieving.

Furthermore, St. Francis Xavier's strong reliance on prayer is a valuable lesson for us. He understood the significance of nurturing his relationship with God through regular prayer and contemplation. We can follow his example by carving out dedicated time for prayer each day, seeking guidance, and drawing strength from our Heavenly Father. We can come together in prayer, fostering a supportive and spiritually enriching environment.

As we honour the legacy of St. Francis Xavier, let us commit ourselves to the values that defined his life - dedication to evangelisation, genuine compassion, and unwavering faith. By applying these principles in our daily lives, we contribute to the growth and flourishing of our parish community.

Let us remember that each one of us has the potential to make a positive impact, just as St. Francis Xavier did. May his life continue to inspire and guide us as we strive for deeper discipleship and a vibrant witness to the love of Christ within our parish and beyond.

***May we, like St. Francis Xavier, become instruments of God's peace and love in the world. St Francis Xavier, Patron of Missions, pray for us!***



### **HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER**

#### **FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

### **IN THE MONTH OF NOV 2023**

#### **WEDDINGS**

We congratulate the following couples:

1. Tay Rui En, Ryan & Tan Hui Chi, Melissa
2. Dominic Lo Kin Mun & Tricia Kuah Zhi Ling
3. Gideon Chia Tai Cheng & Beatrice Mihoko Gomez
4. Daryl Chui Hon Mun & Charlotte Yong Mun Yee
5. Yeow Ren Kai Fabian & Carol Ng Chen Peen

#### **CONDOLENCES**

We offer our prayers to the families of the following who have returned to the Lord:

1. Maria Ang Kern Kee
2. Teresia Tan Cheng Siok
3. William Yap Tiong Seng
4. Dionny Harry Chua Tik Fu

#### **BAPTISMS**

We welcome the following:

1. Zachary Tan Peng Jun
2. Wang Ying Rong, Caleb Isaac
3. Henry Koh Cher Keng





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

## Find out more about Our Patron Saint!

### THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF OUR PATRON SAINT

Pick up a free copy of the pamphlet to learn more about the life of St Francis Xavier.



### EXHIBITION ON ST FRANCIS XAVIER

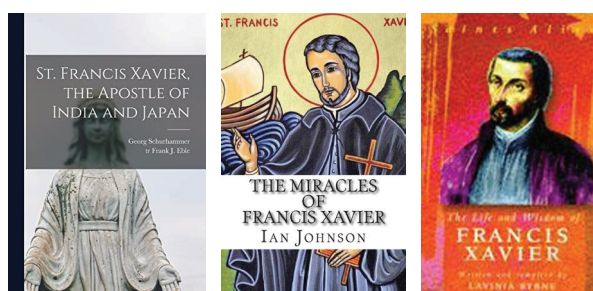
Join us as we celebrate and honour the legacy of St. Francis Xavier through this remarkable exhibition showcasing his life, missionary work, and rich cultural heritage of this inspiring saint. Come and immerse yourself as we display photographs and informative displays representing the countries he visited during his missionary endeavours. This exhibition is not only an opportunity to deepen our understanding of St. Francis Xavier's extraordinary life but also a chance to reflect on our own faith journeys. Let us be inspired by his unwavering dedication, selflessness, and relentless pursuit of spreading the word of God.



### BOOKS ON ST FRANCIS XAVIER AT ST JEROME LIBRARY

2023 marks the 470th anniversary of the burial of St Francis Xavier's incorrupt body on St Paul's Hill in Malacca after he died on Sancian Island off the coast of mainland China on Dec 3, 1552. Over 10 years across India, South-east Asia and Japan, St Francis Xavier visited the sick in hospitals, arranged monetary collections for the poor, built churches, preached among the slums and villages, dialogued with Japanese Daimyos and other political leaders, celebrated Masses and baptised thousands. His zeal for Christ, the Church and his Jesuit Order has been captured in many books. In addition, St Francis Xavier wrote over two thousand letters to Goa, Malacca, Lisbon and Rome (including 5 letters signed off from "Straits of Singapore" dated between July 20 to August 1, 1552).

Come by St Jerome Library this weekend to browse or borrow. The Library will be open after the evening Masses this weekend.



#### 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  
Closed on Public Holidays  
after 9am Mass

##### BACK GATE

**Mon - Sun:**  
5am - 1am  
Closed on Public Holidays  
after 9am Mass

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