



Disciples Making Disciples



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So Close – Yet So Far

Feast of The Holy Family Of Jesus,
Mary And Joseph
31 December 2023

Gen 15:1-6, 21:1-3
Hebr 11:8,11-12,17-19
Lk 2:22-40

Nothing is bigger than the coming of Christ.

But God comes in the most unexpected way. St. Faustina says that he hides under the veil of secrecy and silence. He chooses not to compete with the distractions of the world. To find God, we must singularly seek him whole heartedly (cf. Diary #1591).

In today's Gospel, *Simeon* remarkably finds the Holy Family and the infant Jesus, while others merely see a poor family. How come?

Expectation: In his devoutness and prayer, *Simeon* learns that God does not come only in extraordinary events, but also in the monotony of daily life and little things.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, *Simeon* tempers his expectations and hones his spiritual acuity. Prejudice is upgraded for openness to the mystery of God. He loosens his grip and goes with the Holy Spirit.

Clothed in supernatural disposition, he sees Joseph's humility and holiness, not his labour-type stature and shabby dressing. Neither does he look down on the paltry offering of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

The world sees and judges through appearance and social status. Pride and prejudices too, often blind us to spiritual reality. Can we see Jesus in the construction worker dressed in his dirty, sweaty, smelly overalls?

When expectations mismatch,

“When expectations mismatch, even acts of God's love can drive us to despair instead of salvation.”



even acts of God's love can drive us to despair instead of salvation. We can become so wrapped up in troubles and worries that we fail to recognise Jesus working in our lives. Be concerned, but never anxious. Do our best and leave the rest to God.

We must remember that Jesus comes to save us from sin and death, not from trials and tribulations. His love comes through blessings, as much as in ways we do not like - illness, bereavement, disappointment, correction, humiliation, failure...

Patience: For his entire life, *Simeon* waits patiently. Like *Abram* in the 1st Reading and 2nd Reading, he trusts in the promise of God.

Simeon grows old but not weary, cynical, forgetful, indifferent. He is filled with hope, not consumed by regrets or bitterness associated with one's twilight years. There must have been times when he had been hurt and disappointed. But he does not veer from God but clings tighter instead.

Patience is not simply tolerating difficulties or showing grim determination in the face of hardship. It is the strength of spirit to carry burdens, to accept others as different, to persevere in goodness against all odds, and to keep advancing despite fatigue and listlessness. Salvation requires a long term view and trust in God.

We can learn to be patient in response to God's love. *Romano Guardini*, a German Catholic philosopher once observed that patience is God's way of responding to our weakness and giving us the time we need to change (cf. *Glaubenserkenntnis – The Faith and modern man*, 1949, 28). By that

patience, St. Paul tells us, he “leads [us] to repentance” (Rom 2:4).

Attentiveness: *Simeon's* watchfulness and alertness to the prompting of the Holy Spirit require God to be the centre of his life, the motivation and purpose of all he does.

Centred on the Lord, *Simeon* is spiritually transformed - his intellect is powered with supernatural sharpness and knowing; his will inclines to God's, transcending human conventions and desires; while his memory sustains and energises the spiritual transformation.

To be transformed like *Simeon*, we cannot live separate secular and spiritual lives. We cannot divorce time for the world from time for God. Everything we do, must be centred on the glory of God and the fulfilment of God's perfect will. Only then can we be attentive to God's will under all circumstances.

The Feast of the Holy Family aptly coincides with the “Presentation of the Lord”. In it, Jesus unites two generations - two young parents in Joseph and Mary, and two elderly persons in *Simeon* and Anna.

We are called to emulate these four role models, whose lives are centred on Jesus. When we place Jesus at the centre of our families, marriages and relationships, he will give us the grace to align our expectations to God's will, to bear conflicts and hardships with patience, and to live attentively to each other. These are hallmarks of the Holy Family where love, peace and harmony reigns.

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



NEW YEAR'S EVE: THANKSGIVING MASS

Sun 31 Dec, 11pm



Join us for a time of rosary and reflection at 10.30pm. This will be followed by the Countdown Mass during which we can give thanks to God for the past year, and what we can offer to God for the new year ahead.

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS: MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Mon 1 Jan, 9am

PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

Please note that the Parish Office will be closed on **Mon 1 Jan**.

CONSIDERATE PARKING THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Just a gentle reminder to park considerately, especially at Cooling Close and nearby roads where parking may be limited. Please do not park indiscriminately. Do ensure that our neighbours have access to their houses and rubbish trucks/buses may pass through the narrow lanes. Let's reflect the light of Christ's love to the residents in the neighbourhood. Thank you for your understanding.



INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS

There will be installation of solar panels in and around the church for the next 3 months. Please be aware that heavy machinery and project personnel will be present during this period. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work towards making our church environmentally friendly. Thank you for your support and patience during this project.

Happy New Year

*May the new year be filled with Christ's
radiant hope, boundless love, and tranquil peace.*

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer session is on **Mon 8 Jan 2024**. There will be Praise & Worship followed by praying over by CPG Team. All are welcome!

Venue: SFX Auditorium (Parish Centre, Level 3)

Time: 8pm - 10pm

FAMILY APOSTOLATE: BUILD YOUR HOUSE UPON THE ROCK NOT SAND

Based on the parable in Mt 7: 24-27 which in some way seeks a response to be doers rather than be hearers, our parish is starting a family apostolate. You are invited to join us to support, assist and illuminate not only yourselves and your families but also to share yourselves and be Christ to other individuals and families. Hear us at our Information session on **Sun 14 Jan, 3pm - 4.30pm at JP II Hall**. Scan the QR Code or register at <http://tinyurl.com/SFXFam2023> by Sun 7 Jan as we hope you share some of your thoughts about family challenges! If you wish to find out a little more, meet us at our registration tables outside JP II Hall and the front porch of the Main Church.



CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE: FAMILY CONFERENCE 2024 - BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES

It's Time To Reconnect With Our Families! Calling all Parents, Grandparents, Caregivers and Educators! Join us at our Family Conference 2024! The conference aims to unpack the challenges and opportunities of modern family life, with a focus on building resilience, understanding and unity, by integrating our Catholic faith and values in family life. Let's come together as one family to build stronger families. For more information, visit www.familylife.sg/FamilyConference2024.

Date: Sat 27 Jan 2024

Time: 9am - 5pm

Venue: Saint Francis Xavier Seminary Building
(618 Upper Bukit Timah Road, S678214)

Register: http://bit.ly/CFL_FC2024



MY PERSONAL COMPASS: SHORTENED EDITION BY FR DAVID GARCIA, OP

"My Personal Compass" returns in a shortened edition this year. Come and get introduced to the basics of morality in an increasingly complex world. Build an ethical foundation to journey towards fulfilling your potential as a human person made in the image of God. To register, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/y38faeyr>. For enquiries, please email Caritas Singapore at mpmc@caritas-singapore.org.

Dates: 18 Jan - 21 Mar 2024 (Thursdays)

Time: 7.30pm - 9.30pm

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

Fee: \$100



Christmas @ SFX



HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

FOR THE GIFT OF DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognise the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

IN THE MONTH OF DEC 2023

WEDDINGS

We congratulate the following couples:

1. Tsui Hoong Cher, Andrew & Hofbauer Alexandra Leanne
2. Benedict Wee Jun Xing & Tan Li Lin Trini
3. Oen Weng Yew Timothy & Sandra Sim Yan Li

CONDOLENCES

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

1. Tan Lian Teck, Richard
2. Peter Yong Show Tsuan
3. Mark Cheong Kai Yew
4. Khoo Georgie
5. Lim Chee Teck William
6. Koh Kee Ting, Katherine

BAPTISMS

We welcome the following:

1. Rachel Wong Rui Ting
2. Tan Seng Ziu George
3. Esther Philomena Lim
4. Ean Nathaniel Holland
5. Isaac Wong Jun Rong

Building Our Families with SFX Family Apostolate



What is an ideal family?

We have different experiences of what a family is. Some are closely knitted with love and respect for each other while others are fraught with arguments and division, leading to strained or broken relationships, others have lost members in the family whilst some family members may be 'lost' and a lot more configurations. Safe to say we are all in imperfect families as we are imperfect. While we may be able to articulate what an ideal family life should be using our lenses, our imperfections lead us to struggle on how to improve relations in our homes and have a faithful and fruitful family life despite our differences and imperfections.

The Church has given us the answer in the Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World (*Gaudium Et Spes*, Dec 1965).

"This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age."

We may be living our lives and our faith as 2 separate parts instead of living in communion with our faith. We may not have integrated faith into our daily lives. We thus do not integrate faith in our family life. We suffer feelings of helplessness, confusion, disillusionment and sometimes anger. One important area to be in communion in a family is the practice of forgiveness. As St Paul says in Colossians 3: 13, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you." Mending broken relationships can be like Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken objects. To love when it is difficult, to love unconditionally will give us hope and faith that something more wonderful will emerge. Perhaps we can all reflect and forgive someone in our family today.

The Feast of the Holy Family reminds us of the profound love, faith, and commitment that the Holy Family embodied, setting a beautiful example for all families to follow by surrendering themselves to God's plan which is accepting the experiences of uncertainties, challenges and sufferings that life brings to dying to ourselves just as Christ died on the cross.

Our parish is launching the **Family Apostolate** to encourage families to extend their love and support beyond their own households so that families support other families. Jesus demonstrated compassion, love, and obedience throughout His earthly life. His words "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31), continues to inspire us to foster love, especially to those in need.

Let us start today to reflect on our own lives and how we can emulate the virtues and extend the grace of the Holy Family to the families within our parish community, fostering a network that binds and strengthens us all as we Support, Illuminate and Assist. Come walk on a journey with us to grow in holiness and become fully alive in Christ.



To find out more, come for the Information Session on **Sun 14 Jan 2024, 3pm to 4.30pm** in the JP11 Hall. Scan the QR Code or register at <http://tinyurl.com/SFXFam2023> by **Sun 7 Jan 2024**, as we would like to find out your thoughts and concerns about families today.



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
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

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