



Disciples
Making Disciples



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Into the Desert – with Jesus

1st Sunday of Lent
18 February 2024

Gen 9:8-15
1 Pt 3:18-22
Mk 1:12-15

Our readings this Sunday set the stage for Lent, highlighting several aspects of our faith for us to reflect on in this season.

First and foremost, Jesus enters into the desert with us.

In fact, this is the Holy Spirit's first command right after descending upon Jesus during his baptism at the Jordan. After being formally invested with his messianic office, Jesus is led not to perform miracles or healings, but to "be tempted by the devil" (Mt 4:1).

Pope Benedict XVI explains this surprising turn of events in *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* – Jesus' experience in the desert is a "descent into the perils besetting mankind, for there is no other way to lift up fallen humanity... He must recapitulate the whole of history from its beginnings – from Adam on; he must go through, suffer through, the whole of it, in order to transform it."

If Jesus is to save mankind, he must be fully human (even as he is fully divine), and experience all that man does.

Jesus is therefore the new Adam – this is the second point.

Mark's account in this Sunday's Gospel text especially highlights the parallels between Adam and Jesus. While Adam faced his temptations in the garden, Jesus overcame his in the desert. Adam lost communion with God's creation and creatures in Eden; Jesus was "with the wild beasts" in the desert.

Pope Benedict XVI puts it this way: "The desert – the opposite image of the garden – becomes the place of reconciliation and healing... Once sin has been overcome and man's harmony with God restored [through Jesus], creation is reconciled too. Creation, torn asunder by strife, once more becomes the dwelling place of peace."

Third, God's covenants culminate in Jesus, who is the New Covenant.

In these forty days of Lent, the First Readings illustrate key moments in salvation history. This Sunday begins with God's promise to Noah and his descendants. In the next weeks, we will read about Abraham, Moses, then Jeremiah's prophecy that God's people will "all know [the Lord], from the least of them to the greatest." (Jer 31:34)

And so Lent reaches its zenith at the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter, for we ourselves renew our personal relationship with the Lord.

As St Peter points out in the Second Reading, Noah's ark "saved only a small group of eight people 'by water'... That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pt 3:20-21)

Lent therefore points towards Easter and prepares us for it.

In this regard, Jesus' message to us this Sunday – also his first message upon beginning his public ministry – is clear and simple: "Repent, and believe the Good News." (Mk 1:15)

As we prepare ourselves during this period – be it through prayer, fasting, or alms-giving – let us remember also that Jesus is with us in this season. For St Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews: "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Heb 4:15)



"Jesus has to enter into the drama of human existence, for that belongs to the core of his mission; he has to penetrate it completely, down to its uttermost depths, in order to find the 'lost sheep,' to bear it on his shoulders, and to bring it home."

- Pope Benedict XVI,
Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration

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

REFURBISHMENT OF MOTHER MARY'S STATUE

Mother Mary's statue at the Grotto will be removed for a refurbishment - cleaning and repainting from **21 February to Palm Sunday**.

GIFT COLLECTION

This weekend's GIFT (Giving in Faith and Thankfulness) contributions will support the Catholic Hub building project — a spiritual oasis with prayer spaces, retreat facilities, a multi-purpose hall and a senior clergy residence. Please give generously to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church! Learn more at www.catholicfoundation.sg/the-catholic-hub.

SSVP COLLECTION

With your kind donations last weekend, SSVP was able to raise **\$7,159.00** for our Friends-In-Need. We thank you for your generosity and continued support of their activities.

INTERCESSORY

Come storm heaven with us in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on **Mon 19 Feb 2024, 8pm - 9.30pm** at **Mount Tabor Adoration Rm.**

CHARISMATIC

The next Charismatic Prayer session is on **Mon 19 Feb**. There will be praise & worship followed by a talk on 'The Current Of Grace, 4 Years On - A Charis Meeting With Pope Francis In Rome 2023' by Derrick Chee.

Venue: SFX Auditorium
(Parish Centre, Level 3)
Time: 8pm - 9.30pm

ONE: LENTEN REFLECTION

The Office for the New Evangelisation (ONE) has launched their annual Lent Reflection Booklet. Themed "*Giving Witness to the Word*," we hope that this booklet will help prepare our hearts and minds for the Word this Lenten season, becoming witnesses of Christ's love. To download, visit **one.org.sg**.

PARISH LENT RECOLLECTION

Come join us on **15 - 17 March** as Deacon Sherman Kuek leads us through a reflection of the Sorrowful Mysteries and what this mystery says to us about our Catholic life.

Venue: SFX Auditorium
Cost: \$50
Register: <http://tinyurl.com/SFXPR2024>



PARISH OUTREACH

The previously announced Parish Outreach programme will commence from Feb 2024. Ambassadors, commissioned by the Parish Priest, will be reaching out to selected households to arrange a visit. The purpose of these visits is simply to reach out to each individual household to foster a spirit of community and a sense of belonging within our parish. Please welcome these Ambassadors as you would welcome our Parish Priests into your home.

LENT @ SFX

PRAYER FOR OUR ELECT/CANDIDATES

As our RCIA and RCIY Elect/Candidates prepare for the Easter sacraments, let us spiritually accompany them. Pick a name and pray daily for that person. Prayer cards are available at the back of the Church and in front of Mother Mary's Icon. You may drop a prayer note with the recipient's name indicated in the boxes provided, by Palm Sunday. All notes will be collected and given to them at Easter. Let us welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ into the Church with this our collective Easter gift.

LENTEN OFFERING

At all the Lent weekend Masses, parishioners will be given a 'Lenten Offering' card. Prayerfully commit to your personal Lenten sacrifice - ideally one for each of the three pillars of Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving. The completed card will be collected at the end of the Mass. Make a note of your commitment and faithfully fulfill them for the week(s) ahead.

JOURNEY ON EARLY PARENTING

The SFX Family Apostolate is running a four-session programme for expectant parents and parents with children of up to eight years of age where at least one parent is Catholic. Come and find out more from our sharings of how we grow in our faith with our families as we live out our baptism together in the face of daily challenges.

Dates: 18 Feb, 24 Mar, 21 Apr, 19 May (Sundays)
Time: 3pm - 4.30pm
Venue: JPll Hall
Register: <http://tinyurl.com/JourneyOnEarlyParenting>



ENCOUNTER - LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Are you called to be a Catholic Missionary Disciple? Join CHARIS for their interactive and collaborative course, and discover "what", "why", and "where" your calling may be, to be open and have a courageous heart in becoming a missionary disciple. The course features key speakers like Rev Fr David Garcia, OP, Justin Khoo, and Christopher Chan. Seats are limited!

Date: 24 Feb 2024
Time: 9am - 5pm
Venue: St. Joseph's Institution
Register: <https://makehopehappen.charis-singapore.org/Activities/ohfc4>

CENACLE SISTERS & TEAM: HOLY WEEK RETREAT (STAY-IN)

Drawn by a Love that will not let us go. We celebrate this Paschal Triduum by remembering the gift and witness his faithfulness in this total act of self-giving. In the process, we hope to discover the meaning and relevance of his passion, death and resurrection in our lives. This is a stay-in & silent retreat facilitated by Cenacle Srs & Team.

Dates: 28 - 31 March 2024
Venue: LaSalle House
Register: <http://tinyurl.com/CSHolyWeekRetreat2024>



10 ways to renew your life in Christ this Lent

Lent is a time of conversion and penance that the Catholic Church offers to believers to prepare for and live the Easter triduum — the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. During the 40 days (this year from 14 Feb - 28 Mar), Catholics can set goals to grow in holiness and help others do the same. Here are 10 ways to evangelise and renew your life in Christ this Lent:

1. Receive Communion frequently.

Throughout Lent, attending Mass and receiving Communion is the most effective missionary and evangelising act in which the faithful can participate.

St. John Paul II noted that the Eucharist contains within itself the “world’s principle and eternal source of salvation.” Therefore, Catholics should take advantage of its benefits as often as possible.



2. Pray more deeply.

Many Catholics ignore the importance of prayer in their lives. This season of Lent can be an excellent occasion to deepen our relationship with God through prayer. St. John of the Cross wrote: “Whoever flees prayer, flees all that is good.”



St. Ephrem offers a more practical perspective. For him, prayer forms virtues in our hearts — it protects us from anger, pride, and envy. Praying helps us die to ourselves to configure ourselves to Jesus, which is especially needed during Lent.

3. Commit to reading the Bible.

Pope Benedict XVI always asked Christians to commit to becoming familiar with the holy Scriptures. Incorporate the Bible into your daily prayer. It is, as the Catechism says, the primary source of our knowledge of God.



4. Go to confession!

Do not be afraid. Just go.



5. Help those in need.

The season of Lent invites the faithful to give our lives for others, especially for those most in need as did Christ, “who became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” There are thousands of Catholic charities around the world that need our help.

Jesus told us: “You will always have the poor with you” (Mt 26:11). This was an admonition to always take care of those less fortunate than ourselves. The poor are the treasure of the Church.



6. Cultivate your devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Mary serves as a perfect model for all Catholics: men, women, children, teenagers, mothers, busy professionals, students — anyone seeking to develop a more Christ-centered life during Lent.



7. Be a peacemaker.

Make peace with someone who you believe does not deserve respect, forgiveness, or a moment of consideration. If not, what exactly did Christ mean when he said we should forgive our enemies?



8. Meditate on the Stations of the Cross.

Most parishes offer the opportunity to pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent. Accept this opportunity that God offers you to learn more about faith and about what’s missing in your spiritual life.



9. Stand up for Jesus Christ.

During Lent, make an extra effort to defend Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. When we are faced with intolerant, closed-minded, and anti-Christian opinions, it is incumbent upon us to teach and inform with love those we meet in our daily lives.

The world is becoming increasingly hostile toward Christians and Christianity. The love of Christ is the answer to ignorance, hatred, and intolerance. If not, what exactly do we believe as a community of faith?



10. Evangelise the people you meet along the way.

The advantages of evangelising far outweigh the discomfort we might feel in sharing the Gospel with others. We have the opportunity to explain our beliefs to others who might not understand them, and with the Holy Spirit’s assistance, we may even convince others of the wisdom and reality of our beliefs. Trust in Christ and allow him to speak through you.



PICK OF THE WEEK



Saint Peter

Watch the epic story of the spread of Christianity during the early years of the Church. This film follows the journey of St. Peter through his martyrdom on a cross.



The Afterlife | Eternal Rest | Episode 2

What happens after the moment of our death? Once the soul has been separated from the body, then what? What is heaven, hell, and purgatory? This session looks at the truth about what awaits the human person on the other side of death.



What was the story mentioned in today's first reading that talks about God washing away the sins of the world and making a covenant with His people?

Connect the dots to find out what the story was about!



Mass Times

WEEKDAY MASSES

Mon - Thu:
6.30pm

Tue - Sat:
6.30am

Fri:
8.30pm

Stations of the Cross at 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

ANOIDTING 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