
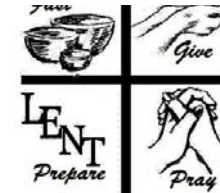


THE M A N N A	NOVENA Saturday : 4.45 pm MASSES Sat. Sunset : 5.30 pm Sunday : 7.00 am, 9.00 am, 11.00 am & 5.30 pm Weekdays : 6.30 am & 6.30 pm	
	Website : www.sfxchurch.sg	
	Rev Fr John Bosco Pereira 62808398 Rev Fr Brian D'Souza 62823151	SFX Kindergarten 62808929 Office/Reception 62806076 Fax 62870027

Josh. 5:9a, 10-12
2 Cor. 5:17-21
Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32



Fourth Sunday of Lent
14 March 2010

TRUSTING IN THE MERCIFUL OF GOD

Our Gospel Reading this weekend tells one of the most well-known parables of Jesus. However, as we listen to the story, we tend to focus on the sinner who has returned home to his father, rather than the unrestrained and unconditional love of the father, who in our case is God the Father. The insight of the parable comes from the manner the father acts rather than from the way the two sons behave.

The Father in the story represents God's attitude toward the lost. God, who is concerned not to punish sinners but with a fatherly concern, wants to lead them to repentance. As Paul puts it in the Second Reading, God's most ardent desire is to reconcile the world to himself. It is significant to note that the Father welcomes the son back even before the latter can announce his repentance. Certainly the son cannot expect any sort of welcome after he has turned his back on his Father. He expects punishment ("treat me as one of your servants") to result from his repentance. Instead he finds a warm welcome effusively and joyfully extended to him by his Father who calls for a re-instatement of his son's position and relationship with him, and a great celebration.




It may seem to us that the Father's love and mercy in this case is "prodigious" and "misplaced". The unforgiveness of his older brother in the story serves to highlight the Father's extravagant forgiveness and God's deep yearning for the sinner and his unswerving will to retrieve what is lost. It is hard in a world of so much distrust, hatred, division and violence to appreciate such an ungrudging love and forgiveness. There is no "I told you so" attitude and no bring up of the past. There is simply a liberating healing joy that is freely given to all of us who have strayed and who have now returned. This reality of God's love touches us profoundly when we consider our own experiences when we come back again and again each Lent to implore God's merciful love.



The cause of God that Jesus preaches is one of forgiveness, reconciliation and our growth in relationship with God. In the Second Reading Paul proclaims that this was accomplished by Christ through his death and resurrection. As always, Paul stresses that it's God's loving and initiative and not man's effort that restores and enhances this relationship. Paul goes on to claim that those who have come to live in Christ through faith and baptism, are now a "new creation". In fact, all things have been made new through Christ. The old creature in us, good originally because of God's creation, but wounded by sin, is now a new creature, restored by Christ's redemptive action.



Yet what has happened in reconciliation can be lost if we are not constantly watchful and allow its effects to continue. Reconciliation then is an ongoing process of growing since we continue to be sinners. Salvation must not be narrowly seen simply in terms of achieving heaven but in terms of the healing that touches and restores our lives here and now. This is especially important in a world in which so much hatred and injustice occur. The wounding of the human spirit means that we are hurt and we need help. We must turn to the merciful and life-giving love of God that "sets us free" and restores us to the wholeness of peace and joy that he yearns for all of us. During Lent, encouraged by the Spirit of God, we will acknowledge our sinfulness and trust in God's tender love arise and return to the Father in the wonderful and life-giving experience of the sacrament of reconciliation.



Announcement



Just a friendly reminder! Motorists be considerate to others. Park your cars in an orderly manner so as not to inconvenience motorists or the neighbours within the church's vicinity. Thank you.

1 Charismatic Praise & Worship and talk on "Virtues" by Fr. David Garcia on Monday, 15 March at 8.00 pm. in the Parish Hall. All are welcome.

Intercessory prayer and recitation of the Rosary at the Grotto on Wednesday, 17 March at 7.15 pm. Come join us in prayer.

2 Canteen is organized by Serangoon North Neighbourhood Group.




CHARITIES ENVELOPES

Parishioners are reminded to return the Charities envelopes with their donation. Please drop these envelopes into the boxes placed in the Church.



SUNDAY & FEAST DAY MISSAL & HYMNALS

Parishioners are reminded to leave the Sunday Missal and Hymnals in the pews after each service.



Friday, 19 March, 2010
after the 6.30 pm Mass



NEW RCIA CLASS

The new RCIA class has started on 2 March at 8.00 pm. in the RCIA Room, SFX Centre. However enquirers interested in this class are still welcome. Please submit the registration forms to the priests of the parish or to the General Office.

Need for Volunteers for Event Publicity

The PPC seeks to have a few volunteers who can help plan with the organizing committees and run publicity campaigns for some of the parish major events this year. Volunteers who wish to give their time and expertise in this area, please do contact Gladys Lim at 92250713.



- Mon. 22 Mar. - Church of the Nativity BVM
- Tues. 23 Mar. - Church of St. Francis Xavier**
- Wed. 24 Mar. - Church of St. Anne
- Thurs. 25 Mar. - Church of Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Mon. 29 Mar. - Church of St Vincent De Paul

All services start at 8.00 pm

MALAYALAM HOLY WEEK AND EASTER PROGRAMME

- 1 **Palm Sunday** – On 28 March, Malayalam Mass at 3.30 pm. at Church of St. Stephen, 30 Salim Road. At 7.30 pm. at Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Boon Lay Avenue.
- 2 **Retreat in Malayalam by Rev. Fr Anthony Kanappilly, OCD director of CEC retreat centre, Perumpadappu, Cochin** – On 29 and 30 March at 7.00 pm. at Church of Lady of Lourdes, 50 Ophir Road. On 31 March at 7.00 pm. at Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Boon Lay Avenue.
- 3 **Holy Thursday** – Malayalam service at 7.00 pm. at Church of St. Francis of Assisi.
- 4 **Good Friday Service** – Malayalam service at 11.00 am. at the Church of St. Stephen.
- 5 **Easter Vigil** – The service in Malayalam at 7.30 pm. at Church of St. Francis of Assisi.
- 6 **Easter Mass** – Sunday at 4.00 pm. at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes.

LETTERS TO THE HEBREWS – by Fr. Ambrose Vaz

6 sessions starting Tuesday, 10 April
9.30 am. - 11.30 am
OR
7.45 pm. - 9.45 pm. at CAEC (2 Highland Road)
Contribution - \$25
Register with SPI @ 6858-3011 or spi@catholic.org.sg by 13 April.

MUSICAL PRODUCTION – YEAR OF THE PRIESTS

There will be a Walk-in audition for singers/actors for a musical production to end the Year of the Priests on Sunday, 14 March 2010 from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm. at CANA, 55 Waterloo Street, 2nd floor. Tel. No 97560239. Audition for musicians and dancers – please email cana@catholiccentre.com.sg