

NEWS AROUND THE PARISH

GIFT - Next weekend, 15/16 December, being the 3rd weekend of the month, there will be a second collection to receive your monthly pledges and contributions for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) campaign to support the organisations and projects of the archdiocese. Every Catholic is encouraged to sign up for a pledge to help with continued support for the numerous archdiocesan organisations needed for the mission of the church. More info is available at gift.catholicfoundation.sg.

IS THE CHRISTMAS STORY TRUE?

“Some Bible critics have argued that the events surrounding the birth of Jesus are literary creations which ought not to be understood as history. Does this obscure the meaning and message of Christmas? Or are there grounds to assert the basic reliability of the text? Join us for this Advent special”. 18 Dec '18 from 7.30pm - 9.00pm at CANA the Catholic Centre (55 Waterloo Street #02-01) Speakers: Mr Keenan Tan & Nick Chui. About the speakers: Keenan and Nick possess Masters degrees in Theology and have been involved in youth an adult faith formation for over a decade.

Please reserve your seat as space is limited. Email theology.sg@gmail.com or sms Nick at 97843692

THE CHANCERY ARCHIVES, a department supporting the Archdiocese in records management and archives, is seeking self-motivated and detail-oriented interns who have academic training in historical research and/or are interested in history and heritage matters. Applicants should be students with minimum 'A' level or diploma qualifications, and should be able to commit to the internship for at least 3 months or longer. Kindly submit your resume, your available period for internship and a recent photo to chanceryrecruitment@catholic.org.sg by 23 Dec '18.

The Indonesian Community in Singapore will hold our Year-end Thanksgiving Mass in Indonesian language on 31 Dec '18 at the Church of the Risen Christ, 91 Toa Payoh Central. The programme will start with rosary recitation at 7.30pm followed by mass and fellowship afterwards. The mass will be offered by Fr. Kamelus Kamus, CICM and Fr. F.X.R. Sambodo, SS.CC. All Indonesians are welcome. For further information, please contact : Sunny (91543490) or Angelika Sundari (91112030).

Sunset Mass	: 5.30pm
Rosary	: 4.30pm (Saturday)
Sunday Masses	: 8.30am (Mandarin), 11.00am (English), 2.00pm (Cantonese), 4.00pm (English)
Weekday Masses	: 7.20am and 5.30pm
Intercessory Prayer	: 7.15pm (English, Thursday)
Infant Jesus Devotion	: 5.30pm (Thursday, followed by Mass)
Divine Mercy Devotion	: 12.30pm (Sunday Mandarin)
Sion Adorers - Holy Hour	: 7.45pm - 8.45pm (Saturday)
Hour of Mercy	: 3.00pm daily
Adoration Chapel	: 8.00am - 9.00pm (Mon to Sat), 8.00am - 7.00pm(Sun)
Secretariat's Operating Hours	: Mon - Fri: 9.30am - 9.30pm, Sat: 9.30am - 5.30pm, Sun: 9.30am - 5.00pm; Lunch hours: 1.00pm - 2.00pm. Closed on Public Holidays.
Columbarium Opening Hours	: Mon - Sun: 7.00am - 7.00pm.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be administered from 5.00pm - 5.20pm on weekdays and Saturday at the confessionals at the baptistery (back of the church). On Sunday, it will be available 30 minutes before each mass.

Parish Priest: Rev Fr EDWARD LIM, OCD, **Asst Parish Priest:** Rev Fr THOMAS LIM OCD, **Priests in Residence:** Rev Fr TOM CURRAN, OCD **Parish Secretariat:** Jannie Lui, Teresa Wong Sok Mun, **Liturgical Co-ordinator:** Alex Wong, alexdominic@gmail.com

Church Donations - Please make your cheque payable to:

(i) **Church of Sts Peter & Paul** - for contributions/donations for general maintenance of our Church and Mass offerings; (ii) **Carmelite Fathers** - for contributions/donations to SPP Friars Community, Friars Formation; (iii) **Soc of St Vincent de Paul (Conf St Peter)** - for donations to the Society of St Vincent de Paul for the poor and needy.

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READINGS: Sunday Missal (Year C) Pg 822

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK: MON 10 December - SAT 15 December 2018

MON: IS 35:1-10, LK 5:17-26 **TUE:** IS 40:1-11, MT 18:12-14 **WED:** ZEC 2:14-17, LK 1:26-38 **THU:** IS 41:13-20, MT 11:11-15 **FRI:** IS 48:17-19, MT 11:16-19 **SAT:** SIR 48:1-4, 9-11, MT 17:9A, 10-13

Daily Prayer This Week

Finding intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives begins with getting in touch with our own desires. Advent is a wonderful time to ask myself, “What am I looking for? What do I desire? What longing can I recognise in my heart?” The answers to those questions will be our best guide for daily prayer. The readings this week offer some possible ways to talk with the Lord about our desires.

We can begin by trying to get in touch with a part of my heart that is divided, perhaps with a desert separating the two parts. For example, is there a disconnect between my primary commitments and the amount of time and attention that I give to them? Is there a distance between who I say I am and who I actually am? Do I experience something missing between what I believe and how I live those beliefs? We all have these contradictions and inconsistencies within us. These are the places into which we can let our Advent desiring grow. This week, we can imagine the prophet saying, “There will be a path between what is separate or divided or at a distance in your life!” or “What is desert, barren, dry and life-less in you will come to life!” We can hear, “You will find freedom and comfort, where you have been finding yourself in a captivity to pattern and routine, where you have felt weak and weary.” “Learn from the Lord and learn real wisdom.”

When one or more of these desires really strikes a chord in our hearts, Advent begins for us. Each morning this week, we can turn to our God, when we first wake up, while in the shower or getting dressed, and simply ask: “Come, Lord. Come into this place, into this embarrassing place of need in my life.” We may be able to be specific and ask,

“Please, Lord, come and be with me and bring life and hope into my morning as I face this meeting.” As we go to work or do laundry or shop, or head home from work, we might ask even more specifically for the grace to love - to take the liberating journey across the desert and let the Lord bring us home to a place of comfort, healing and peace.

Advent is about our coming to a felt sense of our need for a Saviour and letting our Saviour into our hearts to save us. Advent comes alive for us as we identify our desires and let them be expressed as longing and expectant hope. Into this space our Lord comes with good news, healing and a peace the world can't give. As we taste our desires and longing grow, we can give thanks each evening before we go to bed, to acknowledge we are being given a great grace of a growing intimacy with our God, right in the midst of our very busy days.

Taken from the “Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer” on the Creighton University's Online Ministries web site: <http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online>.
html. Used with permission.

Reconciliation and Healing

Advent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Lord offers us. Like all religious experience, it takes preparation.

Preparing

Reconciliation is what God does. We prepare for it by opening ourselves up, by reflecting upon the areas of darkness in our lives into which God so deeply desires to shine a light. It might begin with the simple question: Where might God be offering me forgiveness and healing?

If my answer is, "I don't know," then I have some reflection to do. I can examine my life - what I have done and what I have failed to do - and see what graces are offered me there. If I've come through that "era" of saying that any guilt, anything that makes me feel bad about myself, is a bad thing, to be avoided at all costs, then I might have a difficult time coming to genuine sorrow for my sins. If this is the case, I need to "go to work" on my reflection, asking God to rouse a sense of embarrassment, leading to deep sorrow, for any way I may not have been faithful, honest, loving, self-less or generous - in my relationship with God, with my family, with others. I can look at each of my responsibilities - as a citizen of a city and a country and the world, a neighbour, an employee, a member of a parish or congregation, as a parent or a spouse or as a son or daughter. God will always shine light into these important parts of our lives, to help us experience remorse and a genuine desire for forgiveness and healing. The point here is not ultimately to focus on ourselves. God always reveals us to ourselves, so that God might reveal to us our need for a Saviour. The focus is on God's reconciling, healing love. As John says, "God showed his love for us when he sent his only Son into the world to give us life. Real love isn't our love for God, but God's love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven." 1 John 4:9-10

It may be that I have experienced troubling guilt - coming out of deep childhood trauma or a long-standing sense of shame. This may plague my ability to feel good about myself at all, and therefore to be able to reflect upon my sins - the ways I fail at loving. I can still prepare for genuine reconciliation by preparing to better trust God's love for me, based upon two convictions: First, God's love is unconditional. It is not conditioned on my being better, or my overcoming anything, or even my being good at all. God just loves me. I am always precious in the eyes of the One who made me and desires to embrace me with the gift of complete freedom, in everlasting life. Secondly, God knows everything, including what I'm struggling with or suffering under. And, the God of all compassion, understands me and loves me. It may be that my greatest sin - the place where I need the greatest sorrow and desire for forgiveness and healing is my lack of trust in God's complete and unconditional love for me. We can be certain that that is a gift God deeply desires to offer me.

It may be that when I ask myself the question about where God might be offering me forgiveness and healing, I might first come up with a single thing

that seems "big" to me. I might say, "I feel sorry for how I treat my spouse or my children." I might focus on a long established habit of self-indulgent sexual fantasy, pornography on the internet or masturbation. I may feel most sorrow for what I fail to do - all the "good intentions" that never make their way into action. It is so important not to stop there. None of the "big" things about which we might immediately feel sorry for sums up all of who we are before God and others. They may be very important in giving some clues or some leads in identifying some larger patterns. For example, if a "big" thing that worries me is that I tend to be "loose" with the truth, at times, I can ask what that means, what it reveals about me. I may discover that the real pattern of sin has to do with a deeper dishonesty or lack of integrity: hiding from God; leading a double life; not being who I really am called to be; trying to manage my life on my own terms; manipulating others for my own needs and desires. When the Light of God's love shines into this level of self-awareness, then I am touched by a powerful experience of reconciliation. Even here, in a place I might be most embarrassed and feel most naked, God is loving me and offering me wholeness and joy.

Celebrating Reconciliation

Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving it and celebrating it is what we do. For those of us who are Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a most natural way to celebrate God's reconciliation. We used to think of this sacrament as only about "confession" - that it was like a dumping ground for my sins, where I got forgiven, and I had to "pay a toll". One of the great recoveries in our Christian history is to re-discover the meaning of this sacrament.

It is God who forgives sins. And God forgives us the very moment that we come to the experience that we need forgiveness (which itself comes through God's grace). At that moment, I feel sorrow and a desire for forgiveness and healing. In that moment, I am reconciled with God. The reunion, the bond, the connection, the joy are all there. Three more things remain: to receive it deep within my heart, to celebrate it, and to participate in the healing process.

When I experience God's forgiveness and love, I am invited to savour it and let it touch me deeply. Experiencing compassion, patience, understanding, and forgiveness is itself transforming. If I fail to appreciate what I have just received - freely and undeserved - then I will take it for granted and risk moving on without a real healing happening.

Then, I need to celebrate the reconciliation I have received. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation - individually or in common - I have the wonderful opportunity to ritualise that celebration. In the Sacrament, my personal journey is joined with the mystery of God's saving love, as seen in the scriptures, and in God's desire to save us all. There, in ritual form (even if it is just me and the priest) I "step forward" and admit that I am a sinner, express my sorrow, and I name the places in my life where God is shining a Light into what I have done and what I have failed to do. Then, God's forgiveness is proclaimed "out loud" - for me to hear and rejoice in: "May God grant you pardon and fill you with God's peace."

Many parishes offer an "Advent Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation". It is a wonderful opportunity to join our sisters and brother in asking for forgiveness and healing during this important time of the year.

An integral part of the reconciliation involves the healing process. If I sprain my ankle, the doctor

PARISH NEWS

LAUDAMUS TE - an evening of praise for the gift of Christ, on 31 Dec '18. Programme are as follows: 4.00pm - Reflection on the 'Gloria', 4.15pm - Vivaldi's 'Gloria' RV589. 5.30pm Mary Mother of God (Vigil Mass)

ADVENT 2018 - City District Penitential Services at 8.00pm

- 10 Dec Church of Sts Peter & Paul
- 11 Dec Church of Our Lady of Lourdes
- 12 Dec Church of St Teresa
- 13 Dec Church of St Michael
- 14 Dec Church of St Bernadette
- 17 Dec Church of St Alphonsus (Novena Church)
- 18 Dec Church of The Sacred Heart

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS - Calling all designers!! Join the SPP Logo Design competition as we prepare for our 150th Anniversary Celebrations in the Year 2020. Attractive prizes for top 3 designs. The winning logo will be used in the 150th Anniversary activities and collaterals. For Guidelines, Terms & Conditions, please collect them from the Parish Office from 1 Dec '18 onwards and follow the instructions to submit your entry by 31 Jan '19.

SPP YOUTH CAMP 2018: SEARCH - The

will offer me a number of therapies for healing - ice for the first 24 hours to reduce the swelling, wrapping it, elevating it, and then gradually and carefully using it, until it is healed and strong again. Part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to seek and practice a "remedy" or "medicine" for the healing I desire. Often that will simply be prayer. Often, expressing my gratitude to God is one of the most important steps on the road to recovery from my independence from God. Sometimes, I will need to practice a therapy that is more carefully planned - making choices about what I can practice doing and what I can practice avoiding.

May our Lord grant us all the gift of reconciliation, and may we all receive it and celebrate it well in the holy days ahead.

Source: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/reconciliation-advent.html>

Please refer to Parish News for the Schedule of City District Advent Penitential Services 2018.

youth of SPP are organising a stay-in camp on 14-16 Dec (Fri-Sun). We invite all youth 13-25 years old to join us for some fellowship, faith and fun. For more details, WhatsApp Phoebe 91903788.

BOOKINGS FOR WEDDINGS in the Catholic Church. As of this announcement, dating couples intending to enter into marriage in the Catholic Church will be required to book the date of the Church wedding one-year in advance. The booking will be confirmed upon the couple signing the acknowledgement of the necessary requirements that the priest will explain to them.

JOIN THE SPP SECURITY TEAM - If you are physically fit, passionate about keeping the Parish secure and safe, we welcome you to join the Parish Security Team. You do not need to have experience (best if you have). All you need is the willingness to serve the people, and to commit to occasional meetings and trainings conducted by the Parish Emergency Preparedness Taskforce (PEPT). Some responsibilities of a Security Team member include: looking out for unattended bags, suspicious characters, station at important locations around the Church or patrolling the compound during important Masses and Event. Please leave you name and contact details with the Parish Office.