

NEWS AROUND THE PARISH

ARCHDIOCESAN BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE SINGAPORE PRESENTS 2 COURSES: (1) INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE on: 16 & 23 Jan '18. (Tuesdays) TIME: 9.30am - 11.30am. COST: \$20 (2) **"BOOK OF JEREMIAH"** on: 30 Jan - 22 May '18 - Tue only (Except 13 Mar and 1 May - 15 Sessions) Time: 9.30am to 11.30am Cost: \$120 at: Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre, 2 Highland Road, Singapore 549102. For more information/registration: Email: aba_secretariat@catholic.org.sg Tel: 6280 0354 (Office hours: 9.00am to 1.00pm)

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents. At Christmas we are reminded of Jesus' humanity, his frailty and dependence on those around him. We too reflect on these elements of ourselves as we turn to God for peace and hope amidst the Christmas celebrations. We come together as bereaved parents - in prayer, in WORD and in faith.

The session, run by bereaved parents, meets monthly to pray, reflect and break open the WORD OF GOD. We invite any parent who has lost a child (regardless of age and no matter how recent or long ago) to unite with us in faith. Our monthly session is on every 4th Tuesday of the month, 7:30pm to 9:00pm at Agape Village, Toa Payoh Lorong 8, and the next one would be held on Tue 26 Dec '17. Our contact details are email: pieta.singapore@gmail.com and we can also be found on facebook: <https://facebook.com/PietaSingapore>

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER (ME) Festive Promotion. Give your spouse or loved ones a special gift this festive season. For this December and January only, get ME vouchers from Cana (55 Waterloo Street, Level 2) at half-price of \$25. Book a ME Weekend and pick up communication skills for a stronger marriage. Slots are still open for the Jan 5-7 (fast selling out!), Feb 2-4 and March 2-4 Weekends. E-mail mewkend@gmail.com or visit wwmesg.org

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. Closed on Public Holidays.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be administered from 5.00pm - 5.20pm on weekdays and Saturday at the makeshift confessional 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, Rev Fr GREGORY HON, OCD and Rev Fr JOSEPH KOH, OCD, **General-Delegate:** Rev Fr JOHN CHUA OCD, **Parish Secretary:** Ms Martha Loh, **Parish Clerk:** Ms Jannie Lui, **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 Operations & Maintenance of the Church; (ii) Carmelite Fathers - for contributions/donations to the 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.

Church of Saints Peter & Paul: 225-A Queen Street, Singapore 188551
Tel: +65 6337 2585 Fax: +65 6334 5414 email: sts_peterpaul@singnet.com.sg www.spchurch.org.sg



READINGS: Sunday Missal (Year B) Pg 627

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK: MON 25 December - SAT 30 December 2017

MON: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) **TUE:** ACTS 6:8-10; 7:54-59, MT 10:17-22

WED: 1 JN 1:1-4, JN 20:1A AND 2-8 **THU:** 1 JN 1:5 - 2:2, MT 2:13-18 **FRI:** 1 JN 2:3-11, LK 2:22-35 **SAT:** 1 JN 2:12-17, LK 2:36-40

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Contemplating The Annunciation

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favoured one! The Lord is with you." Luke 1: 26-28

We have heard the story so many times over the years, it sometimes fails to astonish us. The Annunciation. An angel appearing to Mary to ask if she will become the mother of the Christ.

For centuries, artists have pictured Mary at this moment in a variety of devout settings, surrounded by angels, covered in red velvet or standing amid tapestries and silver candles.

These paintings can have a lot of power, and we can study the symbolism and love the artist lavished on them for a long time, being drawn even deeper into the mystery. But sometimes we might feel that these beautiful paintings don't let Mary be real. We might imagine her as barefoot, cooking her own food and having a distinctive personality.

Although some of us may have once arrogantly dismissed her as "irrelevant" to our faith, we might find that we now rely on her for prayers and as a place to mull over the challenges of family and marriage. Using our imaginations,

we might meditate on her, picturing her as a young woman of deep faith, long steeped in the Jewish tradition waiting for the Messiah. She must have read the Isaiah passages many times and prayed over them as her heart filled with gratitude and great dreams.

"O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands." Isaiah 64:7

Her simple life probably included dreams of marriage, raising a family, teaching children the Jewish laws and traditions. But perhaps it was bigger than that. We might imagine that Mary's heart had grown in her humility and generosity to God. Now she would be asked for the ultimate sacrifice. It invites us to wonder what kind of woman Mary was.

We can envision her dark hair and eyes, her love of people. We can picture a charismatic figure, one who had, at any given moment, a kitchen filled with people, enjoying her well-known hospitality. Her stove was always going, good smells filling the air. With our imaginations, we might see Mary as an entertainer with a wonderful, billowing laugh centred in her joy of life. And a storyteller. Mary's tales were famous around town, and in later years, her son would make great use of the talent he learned from his mother.

One morning the young woman was alone in her

kitchen at mid-morning. A pot of soup bubbled on the fire as she prayed over the ancient words of the scriptures. Then, as she so often did, she poured out her heart to God, asking to be of service, to be open to anything he might ask.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

She longed for the Messiah as all Jewish people did. It was deep in her tradition, in the prayers and scriptures. She prayed as she stirred her soup.

She wasn't frightened, but suddenly she was aware of a young man standing in her kitchen. She turned and looked toward him, never taking her hand off the spoon that stirred her soup. His presence was oddly comfortable until he dropped to one knee. “Hail, favoured one. The Lord is with you.”

Favoured one? She was unsure and a small fear crept into her heart. What was this?

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” Luke 1:30

Her first reaction was unexpected. “Oh, please no,” she whispers. What was this invitation? She wanted only a simple life, to marry Joseph, go to the Temple each year, live in the town she knew so well. Fear clung to her and knotted her stomach. “I can't do this. I don't know how. I'm not worthy. I know I said I would do anything, but God must have me confused with someone else. Someone more worthy.”

She stood in shock while the young man waited for her answer. The empty kitchen was silent, except for the constant simmer of the soup. She closed her eyes. Fear. Wasn't that always what sent her to God? She breathed deeply and prayed. Open my heart. Let me be your servant. Lead me where you desire. You will be with me.

Then, she knew. She turned back to the young man and nodded. I will do just as I have been asked, she said.

And deep in our own souls, we pray with the same heart, asking for the fears to be eased, asking to feel God walking with us in this daily path of life, not certain that we can handle everything that is coming.

Mary, show us how. Teach us to trust in God as you have. Let us do what sometimes seems unthinkable in this world: to be humble and to accept without always understanding why or how.

Source: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/annunciation.html>

Entering into and Celebrating the CHRISTMAS SEASON

Christmas is not the end of Advent. It is a real season of the Church year. We usually miss it because the consumer society that some of us live in has nothing to offer us, except for days to return gifts. Too often, within days after Christmas day, the decorations are down and it is over.

This year, let's try to really celebrate Christmas and the days that follow. Let's enter a new Season, which has its own spirit and desires and graces.

Special Feasts begin the season and we continue the story, so that we enter more deeply into the story of Jesus' coming to be one with our life, but also that we might enter more deeply into how Jesus comes this year to bless each of us.

Asking for the Grace We Desire

Sometimes we come up to Christmas eve and Christmas day, as well as the days after, with little or no time for formal prayer at all. Every moment, it seems, is filled with some preparation, some tradition, having people over to our house or going to others' homes. Even those of us who are home bound or those of us who might be alone these days sometimes have difficulty “getting to” the heart of the Gift offered us these days.

This year, let's ask for the grace or graces we desire. We may have many desires swirling around inside, or we may feel so fragmented that we don't know what we desire.

Keeping Focused in the “Background”

The key to finding intimacy with God in the midst of each of our activities is to go through

our day with an awareness of what it all means. With focus and a conscious attention to our desires, we can maintain an alive “background,” even while rushing somewhere, opening packages, eating dinner or avoiding a conflict.

For example, while going to a family dinner or while preparing a meal - even though there might be music on or other conversation happening around me - I can take brief moments to “collect” who I am and why I'm here and what I desire for this moment in this day. In a few simple deep breaths, I can say, “O Lord, as you came into our world to share our lives, please come into this day and give us peace. Please bless me, my family and friends at this meal with a little more love. I hand over to you my anxieties and fears, as I ask you for your own peace.”

Letting Rituals and Gestures Be Open to Grace

We hope that we will be able to celebrate the Eucharist or some common prayer with our faith community. Let's let that celebration be richly open to grace, with our attention and prayer. With focused attention, we can let many very ordinary parts of our days become prayerful and rich with grace. Imagine how different this Christmas would be if we let every handshake, touch on the arm, every hug, every kiss, be an

PARISH NEWS

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 24 Dec '17 - Masses as usual i.e. 8.30am (Mandarin), 11.00am (English), 2.00pm (Cantonese). NO 4.00pm Mass on this day.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE - Sunday, 24 December, Christmas Eve: 9.00pm (Mandarin, Carolling at 8.30pm), 12.00am midnight (Carolling at 11.00pm). Monday, 25 December Christmas Day: 8.30am (Mandarin), 11.00am (English), 2.00pm (Cantonese)

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD - Mass in English will be celebrated on Mon 1 Jan '18 at 9am.

SPP YEAR-END THANKSGIVING CELEBRATIONS - Date: 31 Dec '17, (Sun) **Special Thanksgiving Mass** at 5.30pm with

opportunity - even for a few brief seconds - to turn to God in thanksgiving and with a prayer. “Thank you so much for Ann; she is such a gift. Please give her your freedom and peace.” “Chris is such a wonderful partner. Please fill our marriage with faith, generosity and self-sacrificing love.” “Lord, you know the struggles I have with Michael; let me be as compassionate and loving with him as you are.”

In these or similar brief prayers, our very ordinary gestures of greeting might be transformed and full of faith. Any other activity can become a ritual, if I let it have meaning: turning on the Christmas tree lights, (“Lord, let your Light brighten this house this day.”), opening the front door to guests, (“Lord, we open our house and our hearts to the gifts you bring us.”), sitting down after a big meal, (“Lord, I feel full, in so many ways; thank you.”).

And Giving Thanks at the End

At the end of our day, perhaps as we change our clothes, or just as we get into bed, we can give thanks for the wonder of God's gift to us in the coming of Jesus into our world, and for the graces that came to us through his coming to us today.

Source: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/christmas.html>

renewal of marriage vows and blessings for all married couples. Please note that there is NO 4.00pm Mass on this day. The car park will be closed after the morning mass on Thursday 28 Dec 2017 for set-up of tentage for our year-end event. Limited parking will be available thereafter. Car park will again be closed after the 11.00am mass on Sunday 31 Dec 2017 and reopen on Monday 1 Jan 2018 after the tentage removal. We apologise for the inconvenience caused.

CATECHISM CLASS 2018 - Commences on Sun 21 Jan '18 at 9.30am.

ADVENT VESPERS will be held on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of December 2017 at 8pm in preparation for Christmas. There will be the exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and meditations led by Fr Edward Lim. Psalms and canticles will be led by the Schola Cantorum.