



A Reflection on the Covid-19 Pandemic

For Us The Bells Peal

Change of Lifestyle and Mindset



Sunday morning! It was about 10.10 am. I was walking along Queen's Road, nearing Empress. It was all strange. I was feeling out-of-sorts. Where was the rush of people up the slope at Empress? Where was the busy-ness of the roads? Then it happened. The bells of our beloved church, St Ignatius, pealed. Those bells have been doing this for nearly 60 years every Sunday, the Lord's Day. This is the day for Mass for our ever growing number of parishioners — seniors, singles, parents, young, children, infants — making their way to one of several Masses each weekend. And just before each Mass, these bells will ring to call us to prayer together, and for some, to make haste as it was almost time.

Allow me to share a little about these bells at St Ignatius.

The 3 cast-iron bells I was told in my teens were named: Casper, Melchior and Balthasar. The Wise Men from the East, appearing on the

One of the burning questions for many of us is the deeper theological and faith issue about how we understand and make sense of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Firstly, we come to the realisation of our common shared humanity — that we are part of the fearsome, but fragile human race. The Covid-19 virus pandemic blows away all our superficial and artificial categories of status, skin colour, race, identity, nationality and even religion.

Indeed, this virus is no respecter of persons — of the rich or poor, powerful or powerless, the healthy or sick, black or white, big or small, strong or weak. Everyone is fair game. Everyone is a target and everyone is vulnerable when we let our guard down and become careless or complacent. Fundamentally, we are forced to conclude that we are created by God. Whether we believe in this fact or not does not negate this reality — the existence of God. It is the most basic premise of our human existence that every human person is created by and endowed with an equal dignity and value, and loved uniquely in the eyes of God.

Secondly, we have to rediscover our place in the scheme of God's creation and learn to humbly walk with our heads down to see how we have pushed nature to the brink and it is fighting back with a vengeance at the way we are treating the world with our exploitation of all the resources and treasury of Mother Earth. There are signs that some leaders have eyes, but do not want to see; have ears, but do not listen, and have hearts, but do not feel the pain and cry of Mother Earth! This virus is teaching us a lesson to stop, to think, to reset and to remember that we are creatures and not the Creator; stewards not Master and pilgrims not pilferers of a world that does not belong to us.

Finally, we are reminded of the beautiful words of the Prophet Joel: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8).

Let us at least learn to humbly change our lifestyle and attitude towards each other, and accept God's beautiful world that is created good.

FR COLIN TAN SJ

Epiphany to pay homage to the infant King. The bells were blessed and installed in the 'old' church in 1961. An inscription on each bell mentions Holland, the country of making. They were operated by pressing buttons on an archaic-looking device. It was the sacristan's duty to sound them.

When the church was to be rebuilt, the bells were removed, placed in wooden boxes, and set aside. It remained on the veranda of Kingsmead Hall. For the first year remembrance of the 9/11 tragedy, the US Embassy approached us to borrow 2 bells to be placed on embassy grounds. One within the interior of the building, and the other at the entrance of the venue. This was done so that passers-by had a chance to 'ring' the bell once. It was a most distinguished moment for a treasure of ours to serve at the

commemoration of loved ones, God's loved ones.

Today, the bells hang even higher in the bell-tower. The operation is automatic, and they can be set for various times and types of peels. One added feature, with the opening of the new church in 2003, was to sound for the Angelus prayer, or the Regina Caeli for Eastertide, at noon. This became a good reminder for us to pause for prayer in the midst of our day. Soon the greatest liturgical celebration, Easter, will be upon us. While the bells will be silenced for the Sacred Triduum, commencing on Holy Thursday evening, they will peel, loud and bright, on Easter morning, and onwards.

For now we remain at prayer in our own spaces and times. May the bells of



St Ignatius call us to open our ears and hearts, move our feet, and stretch out our hands to God and to God's ways. Like the Wise Men, we continue to make our way to Jesus.

FR LESLIE RAJ SJ

PARISH NEWS

Regulations pertaining to Church ministries, activities and events are available at:

MASS SCHEDULE: <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/sacraments/mass-schedule-offering/mass-schedule>

COVID 19 PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES: <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/what-s-happening/all-events/849-covid-19-precautionary-measures>

INFANT BAPTISM: <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/sacraments/infant-adult-baptism>

MASS OFFERING

In view of the suspension of all church Masses until further notice, all Mass Intentions will be offered by priests during their private daily Masses.

HOLY TRIDUUM MASSES AND SERVICE

is available at our website, <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/what-s-happening/gallery/video-gallery>

Holy Thursday Mass @ 6.00pm

Good Friday Service live stream @ 3.00pm

Easter Sunday Mass live stream @ 10.15am

Our Archbishop is calling for the whole church to join him to pray, fast and do penance for 24 hours from 7.00pm,

Holy Tuesday to 7.00pm, Holy Wednesday. Please join in with your family: <https://www.catholic.sg/24hr/>

A recorded **GOSPEL REFLECTION** for this weekend, 5 April by Fr Jerome is available at:

<https://stignatius.org.sg/home/what-s-happening/gallery/video-gallery>

CHURCH OFFICE AND COLUMBARIUM

The church building, columbarium and parish office will be closed from Monday 6 April 2020 until further notice.

LAUDATO SI' REFLECTION

During this time of uncertainty, let us pause to reflect on all that the Lord has blessed us with, for the beauty of the earth and all of nature. Although this Laudato Si' Reflection was meant to be a meditative walk in our parish garden, the Green Ministry invites you to instead spend some quiet time with our Lord in your own homes, with your families, in your gardens or at the park. May we "discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation ... that God is present in the whole universe and in the smallest of all creatures".



Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Jerome Leon, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest
Angela Kurnadi Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Cheryl Lek Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator
Robert Ong Sacristan ★ David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Communications Manager