



CATHOLIC CHURCH of St Ignatius

Our Need for Salvation



I remember being very moved by Pope Francis's *Urbi et Orbi* (To the City and the World) prayer on 27 March, a special prayer and blessing that's normally only given at Christmas and Easter. His address, done under a canopy from the steps in front of St Peter's Basilica was particularly stark because unlike the normal times when the Pope speaks, he did so in the failing evening light, before an empty square. This starkness was emphasised by the gloomy rain that gave an even more sombre atmosphere to the whole scene. In it, the Holy Father exhorted us all to have faith, to cast our anxieties towards the Lord in this time of uncertainty. Powerful words that cut through the difficulty of our times.

One line in particular struck me — that “the beginning of faith is the recognition of our need for salvation”. That single line stayed with me for quite a while, a stark reminder that our faith is indeed all about salvation and that we're sorely in need of both all the time, especially these days. This line also seems particularly apt as a means of approaching our dear friend St Thomas, who has gained through the ages the unfortunate appellation of “doubting,” a label that I feel is unjust. If people did the same thing now, they would be praised for being rational, empirical, and scientific. But poor Thomas got the bad reputation for unbelief through

his asking for physical verification of Christ's wounds when all he did was to express his need for salvation.

The faith that Thomas had should not be in doubt because he journeyed by Jesus' side for three years, learning and growing with the Lord in all things. That he still wanted to be with the disciples after the crucifixion meant that Jesus still meant something to him and that the faith might have been shaken but was still present. His journeys with Jesus would have made him very much aware of the salvation that the one whom he was following was to bring and how much we all need this salvation. His recognition of this need for salvation was the beginning of his faith. This shows that Thomas had the faith all the time, and that episode described in today's gospel reading was just an example of how our faith, as with everything else in our lives, ebbs and flows with time and situation. His very moving acknowledgement of Jesus as “My Lord and my God!” was an indication of the upward movement of his faith, seeing Jesus who is our salvation in the flesh. Faith renewed; salvation recognised.

And Thomas' experience is also our experience. Pope Francis reminded us to bring our anxieties before the Lord and that action requires our faith because we can't let go of our anxieties without knowing

that the Lord has already saved us. That's where our faith and our current reality can come together. We recognise that we're in need of salvation, and we pray fervently for the health of our loved ones and for the whole world to be healed of this pandemic. And it is these prayers from this need of salvation that strengthen our faith knowing that we're not in control amidst all the uncertainty, and that we cannot live our lives properly without God's help. That's our turn to salvation and that's when our faith, like Thomas', makes that upward movement.

It's important to enter fully into the liturgical season of Easter even if we're unable to be present at the liturgies in person. Entering fully into Easter involves being with the risen Lord in whatever way we can — we may be on the lower end of our faith lives like Thomas was in the beginning or we could be filled with joy. The important thing is to be present with the Lord, allowing the glory and joy of Easter to pervade our daily lives, to notice how the light of the Lord can shine through the cracks of whatever darkness we face, so that we can proclaim as Thomas did, with great reverence and love, “My Lord and my God!”

DCN STANLEY GOH, SJ

PARISH NEWS

Fr Jerome celebrates Mass every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, at 12noon. Livestream at www.facebook.com/mas.jesuits.fgiat/
It is accessible to all, even if you do not have a Facebook account.

During this "Circuit Breaker", the Church of St Ignatius, including ALL its premises, is closed to the public. However, we have noticed that some people are still visiting the church grounds for whatever reasons.
For your health and safety, please do not enter church grounds. The pedestrian passage way/staircase next to the main church building is also closed until further notice.
If you have any business to transact with the parish office during this period, please first contact us by telephone (6466 0625) or email (administrator@stignatius.org.sg) and we will advise you on how to proceed.

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>

THANK YOU TO OUR PARISHIONERS

Our parish priests, Frs Colin, Jerome and Ravi would like to thank all parishioners for their thoughtfulness and generous donation to the Church, even though the Church is closed and all Masses have been suspended .

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.

DONATION TO MASS COLLECTION

If you wish to donate to the Mass collection, you may do so as follows:

1) PAYNOW

Go to your mobile application eg DBS Digibank, UOB Mighty, etc
Select: PayNow
Select: Unique Entity Number (UEN); Key-in: T08CC4052A

It will display: MAKE A TRANSFER in RED; Tap

It will display: PayNow to UEN

CHURCH OF ST IGNATIUS

UEN: T08CC4052A

Key in the amount: SGD (in numerical)

Enter in UEN/Bill Reference No: Mass collection

Tap: NEXT

Review Transfer: details of your transfer – please check and if correct; tap on TRANSFER NOW

Confirmation of payment will be displayed.

2) CASH

a) Drop in church Mass Offering Box located at the church vestry or office

b) Office – a receipt will be issued.

3) CHEQUE

Issue to "CHURCH OF ST IGNATIUS" and indicate behind cheque: Mass collection and mail to: Church of St Ignatius, 120 King's Road, Singapore 268172.

4) VIA INTERNET TRANSFER

Please call the church office for details of bank account.

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, or in your gardens. 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".



EASTER REFLECTION BOOKLET

The Office for the New Evangelisation has produced a booklet of reflections for the season of Easter in English, Mandarin and Tamil. The theme is "Singing Alleluia in Communion".

Available online at tinyurl.com/20easterbooklet

FORMED.ORG

Parishioners of St Ignatius can now access this online platform, which provides information on the truth, teaching and meaning of the Catholic faith. Explore links to renowned speakers, online movies and audio resources.
Go to 1) www.FORMED.org 2) Enter our parish code 4904ed on the homepage.

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

Keeping in Touch

Hi all,

I was surprised at how Monday and Tuesday after Easter were marked by slumps in the number of WhatsApp messages on my phone. I wondered why ... fatigue? A collective slump after a major Christian holiday? The communal grief of an Easter people over a real loss of community during a religious festival? I had no answer. But I remarked to some people in my community via Zoom that maybe it's time to return to old fashioned letter writing. And this morning, I found to my delight, a long letter in my email.

One of the more interesting and possible things happening now for me in school is that almost every reading is being bent to address COVID-19 and its impact. Raimon Panikkar tends to write in a somewhat esoteric manner (for the man on the street), but he does give some very good lectures at times that makes him more accessible. As it turns out, there are books that help to access his thoughts, and they are worthwhile to turn to.

For example, his ideas of how humanity, God and the cosmos are somehow one and influencing each other is quite exciting. It marries interesting concepts from the mystery of the Trinity (perichoresis, or inter-penetration), to the theology of creation (God in all things) and ecclesiology (the people of God being all with the spirit of God), as well as the novel concept of Christianness in that anybody who exhibits the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is essentially love - and that means everyone (and possibly even animals) - has that ability to express, if not have an innate spirit, of Jesus Christ.

Such an idea of love as being in everyone is somewhat fleshed out by Robert Daly, SJ, who realized that Christian sacrifice is none other than starting to express love like the love of Jesus Christ. He couches this description with "starting" because it is a journey that ebbs and surges - we all fall down at one point or other, but that should not take away the moments when we have stepped up and became better than what we thought we could be. The Holy Spirit is the one that enables us to recognize and express such love, because we have received the Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, when someone had loved us, and we had accepted and given recognition to that love.

During this pandemic, we are navigating with various types of grief. There is ambiguous grief, where we don't know what it is, but we have a pervading sense of sadness. There is disenfranchised grief, as we are grieving the loss of many things that are important, but no one else seems to be acknowledging it as grief. We are caught up in anticipatory grief, as COVID-19 still wreaks its effects on us like a slow-motion train wreck that doesn't seem to have any ending, or any indication of its next impact. We suffer for all these griefs because we are not able to acknowledge each and every one of them.

We suffer griefs the most when we communally are not able to acknowledge them, as grieving is really a social, communal activity that needs affirmation, acknowledgement, acceptance - all the positive forms of relationships that we expect and are used to from physical communal interactions. We feel disconcerted when we're doing it alone, or feel so alone doing it. We often can't tell people what we're feeling.

I picked up an email subscription from Fatherly by accident, and during these COVID-19 days I have been reading, not because I'm a parent, but because I'm parenting myself. I'm telling myself the truths and not sugar coating them so that part of me accepts and lives with this absurd situation I find myself in, that which I have no control - but does not take away my agency. I can still write this letter, I can still host a webinar (maybe after my finals!), I can still bake and give to my community, I can do so much, if I wish.

From these readings, musing and other webinars, I find myself in joining conscientiously (including one from Singapore on civic-mindedness). It's vitally important to tell all those we know that there is more to life that is still waiting for us to make meaning of. And we really have all we need to make meaning together.

Everyone shares the same humanity. Even a common divinity (as understood beyond the structures and forms of religion, or so Raimon Panikkar says - he should know, he's well-read in Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, and his mother was Spanish, and he lectured theology in Berkeley). Write to someone, Reach out and share, even the most mundane. Make meaning with your words, by making this life of ours a web of relationships with shared meanings. Explore the lost art of letter writing. Talk. You're not alone, and you're not grieving in loneliness - the whole planet is grieving. We've only to reach out to each other in our own ways and steps, in our particular weaknesses. As long as we are authentic and accepting of ourselves, that's all God and each of us can expect.

God bless, and keep safe.

Yours in Christ,
Michael Phung, SJ