



Being Opened: A life of Conversion



“Ephphatha!” that is, **“Be Opened!”**. I sometimes wonder if this was the first word that the deaf person heard after he was healed by Jesus, because if it were, it would surely have been very deeply imprinted in his mind and consciousness. In the gospel narratives, we’re always told about what happens to people as they approach Jesus and the details of their miraculous healing, but have we thought about what happens to them after? In the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola, we learn about the use of imaginative contemplation as a means of praying with the Gospels. It is a method of prayer where we place ourselves in the Gospel scene, become aware of Jesus and what he does, while paying attention to what’s going on with the other people, and recognising how we feel in the process. It’s a wonderful method of growing our relationship with Jesus as we become more aware of how we’re responding to him.

One insight that I had in my contemplation from this weekend’s gospel reading has to do with what happened to the man after he regained his hearing. It must have been wonderful for someone who had lived in silence all his life to now be able to hear, but the new sounds would also have been confusing

and possibly even frightening at the start. How would someone who has not heard speech and other sounds learn to tell the difference between them and wouldn’t he have to go through the long and laborious process of learning to speak as well? These thoughts seemed like distractions as I contemplated the scene, and for a while, I wondered if all this trauma was worth it for the man.

Then I remembered the delight that I feel when I hear a beautiful piece of music, the simple pleasure of hearing a bird sing outside my window, the joy when I hear the voice of a loved one speaking with me. Sounds bring joy and so the healed man would have gradually learnt to differentiate sounds and appreciate their roles in his life. Learning to deal with a new sense of hearing can be a little distressing but with patience, time and the support of others, life will get better. This gradual learning to live with sound is real as members of my own family have shared their struggles adapting to new hearing-aids, slowly learning to distinguish background noises from those that matter and getting used to all the sounds of the world that we’ve already learned to filter out.

In many ways we are like the deaf man who after having been healed has to learn to live this

new life with all the sounds of the world, struggling to process and accept this great gift that was given him. We experience similar miracles when we’re led to conversion in our lives, conversion that can happen in big and small ways. This conversion occurs where the Lord whispers to us, *“Ephphatha, be opened”*, and we respond with open hearts and minds to the love that He offers. We can be invited to conversion in many different ways – new ways of being with people, turning away from a bad habit or just learning to be more loving. We realise that conversion is not a single moment, but a process of growth and that the moment of being opened is the start of that process where we turn back to the Lord. That process is not always easy as we often struggle to live the life of conversion, gradually learning to live better so that we can be better disciples of the Lord.

Just as the deaf man had to be patient in adjusting to his new world of sound, so too do we need to be patient with ourselves as we seek to adjust to our new converted lives. All this is worth our while as we grow closer to the Lord who calls us, and we begin to see and feel his glory emerging from the jumbled cacophony of the world.

FR STANLEY GOH, SJ

PARISH NEWS

SEPTEMBER MASS BOOKINGS

Stage 3 Mass bookings for September opens on **7 Sep at 3pm** via myCatholic.sg. Parishioners will be able to book **ONE additional weekend Mass** and up to **FIVE weekday Masses**, subject to availability.

The cut-off time for Mass bookings/ cancellations in September has been reduced from **3 hours to 1 hour**. Do cancel your bookings if you are unable to attend.

LIVESTREAM MASSES SCHEDULE

Mondays - Fridays, 7.00pm. Saturday 6.00pm.
Sunday 8.15am, 10.15am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm.
Please go to bit.ly/stigslivestream

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are available every **Monday, 6.00pm-6.40pm** and **Wednesday, 6.00pm-6.20pm**. Kindly call the parish office (Pauline/ Suzie) to make an appointment before coming down. **Confession slots are limited to 5 persons per priest.**

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL COMMUNITY

CRC Reflects & Shares on the Season of Creation — a reminder that every creature belongs to the Earth community, which in turn belongs to God our Creator. The Earth is a gift held in trust for us to safeguard. Let us care for, sustain & renew this gift, so every living creature continues to flourish for future generations to come. Join us this **Wednesday, 08 September at 8pm**. Email cpg.cosi@gmail.com for Zoom details.

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Do you desire to help the poor and needy? Are you looking for ways to grow spiritually? Is God calling you to do something more with your life?

Calling all who wish to live their faith by loving and serving their neighbours. SSVP is looking for passionate volunteers to join in our cause.

Email us at ssvp.stignatius@gmail.com or click here to find out more: tinyurl.com/SSVP-Volunteer-Form

VISITING THE COLUMBARIUM

Our Columbarium is open for visits on Saturdays, 5.00pm-5.45pm; and Sundays, 9.00am-9.45am, 11.00am-11.45am, 1.00pm-1.45pm, and 5.00pm-5.45pm.

For September bookings, please book at bit.ly/stigscolumbariumSep2021

If you need help in booking, please call the church office at 6466 0625 (Pauline/Suzie). After office hours, WhatsApp/Telegram/SMS 9675 6621.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

WELCOMING HOME RETURNING CATHOLICS

Landings Singapore presents a new 10 week programme which runs from **14 September 2021 through 16 November 2021, every Tuesday 8pm to 9.30pm**. A weekend virtual retreat takes place near the end of this programme on **6-7 November 2021**. All sessions will be held over Zoom.

We invite Catholics seeking a reconnection with the faith to register at bit.ly/3gFDObF or scan the QR code below. Registration closes on **7 September 2021**.

What to expect:

- Check-in time and opening prayer
- Faith story-telling
- Response to story
- Fellowship
- Reflection on Catholic themes
- Closing Prayer

For more information, email singapore@landings.org.sg or visit www.landings.org.sg

Welcome Home!

Register via the QR code.

A programme by
Landings
Singapore

landings.org.sg

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Gregory Tan, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest

Pauline Khoo Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Natalie Ang Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator

David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Sacristan ★ Chrestella Setiyadi Communications Manager



SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray and protect God's creation. The season starts from **1 September**, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on **4 October**, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations.

2021 Theme

This year, we will be uniting around the theme, **"A Home For All? Renewing the Oikos of God"**. *Oikos* is the Greek word for "home", or "household". By rooting the theme in the concept of *oikos*, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth.

Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* ("Praise be to you") is a worldwide wake up call to help us understand that the climate crisis is a real threat to all life on Earth. We are contributing to the destruction of the environment with our consumerism and business interests, and our dependency on fossil fuels. We are threatening the relationship between Man and Nature and to each other by our actions.

How are we shaping the future of our planet? *"I urgently appeal.. for a new dialogue... a conversation that includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all,"* said Pope Francis. We need an ecological conversion and live our vocation to be **"protectors of God's handiwork (which) is essential to a life of virtue. It is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience"** (*Laudato Si'* #217)

How can we as a parish community, within our Ministries, as a family, and as individuals, answer God's call for us to care and sustain the earth and the environment?

Abraham's tent, the symbol of this year's Season of Creation, signifies our commitment to safeguard a place for all who share our common home, just as Abraham did in the Book of Genesis. **Will you answer God's call?**

