



Finding God in Compassion

I have been following the webinar series on the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences organised by the Church of St Francis Xavier, Petaling Jaya. The lay presenters diligently read and prepared months ahead. Their presentations were edifying, and it was heartening to witness the Holy Spirit inspiring and welcomed as God, not bounded by our understanding or needs. A few weeks later, however, the idea of finding God in everything challenged some participants to request clarifications and further discussion.

These two experiences framed my sense of the major theme running through the readings: the centrality of God in ordering our lives. The sense of finding God in all things is not to worship the things as they are, but to be able to relate to God, and in turn, have a deeper relationship with God and creation.

An Eastern Orthodox Church discussion on “essence” and “energies” with Gregory Palamas, (d1359), a major theologian, may help us diffuse this conundrum. From the book, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads (Classics of Western Spirituality)*, **Essence** is God as a reality beyond all comprehension and creation, such as the Trinity.

Energies are God's participation or work in creation. Paraphrasing Basil the Great's quotation, in that “[t]he guarantee of the existence of [God's] essence is its natural energy which leads the mind to the nature [of God],” such that awe of creation gives effective witness about God.

Essence and energies may belong in an esoteric theological discussion. However, I can see its appeal in our hyper-rational default that wishes to evaluate and compartmentalise the chaos that confronts us every day.

A recent book discussion noted how practising compassion can make a person vulnerable to exploitation by others who are more selfish (*This View of Life and Atlas Hugged* by David Sloan Wilson). A safe way of practising compassion is when the person can do so with the support of a small group of friends in a larger morally conditioned environment. Such friends and companions help give meaning to your life, and assures the expression of your compassionate self is safest in an orderly context where everyone acts morally.

It is the utopian ideal of the various life situations we encounter. We are called to risk these expressions of compassion, not because we expect a high

return; nor are we unaware of all the possible hurt and exploitation. Rather, it is because Jesus Christ has paid the ultimate price for compassion, and has opened the way to salvation which the disappointments of this world cannot take away.

After declaring the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-12), Jesus teaches the crowds the golden rule, “**Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.**” By referring to “the law and the prophets”, Jesus makes the claim that this is God's will for us.

However, one of the less evident operative conditions of the golden rule is that everyone needs to have a similar interest to act morally and justly. Instead of advocating a police state, Jesus had other ideas, evident in earlier passages. Jesus turns our focus inwards, to our own self. **What are my own personal barriers to expressing compassion?**

Jesus is suggesting a revolution of compassion that starts with ourselves. He did not judge if the people around him practise compassion before acting compassionately. Jesus acts compassionately because compassion is needed. He does not judge nor require pre-requisites prior to taking action.

Jesus did what he could. Likewise, just do your best, and be inspired by the Spirit in you and in the person you express your compassion to. Allow yourself to find God in all things that desire your compassion.

MICHAEL PHUNG, SJ

PARISH NEWS

OCTOBER MASS BOOKINGS

Stage 1 Mass bookings for October will open on **28 September at 3pm** via myCatholic.sg. Parishioners will be able to book **ONE weekend Mass** and up to **FIVE weekday Masses** at each stage, subject to availability.

The cut-off time for Mass bookings/ cancellations has been reduced from **3 hours to 1 hour**. Please cancel your booking if you are unable to attend so that another parishioner may take your place.

MASS COLLECTION APPEAL

Our Mass Collection has dropped by 40% over the past 3 months due to reduced Mass capacity. We appeal to your generosity to continue donating to the needs of our Church. Contributions towards the Church's expenses and maintenance can be made via **PayNow, Cheque or Internet Bank Transfer**. Details can be found at <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/donation>

NOMINATIONS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We are inviting parishioners who would like to stand for election to the PPC Executive Committee or who would like to nominate other parishioners whom they consider suitable to serve the parish as PPC Exco members.

Nomination forms and more details are available on our [parish website](http://parishwebsite.com). Completed nomination forms must be submitted to the Parish Office by **Friday, 15 October 2021**.

Elections to the PPC Exco will be held at our annual **Parish Assembly on Saturday, 23 October 2021, 2pm - 4pm** via Zoom. All parishioners are cordially invited. Please sign up at <http://bit.ly/3kebiHG>

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL COMMUNITY

Matthew 25:40 says "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me". World Migrants Day is celebrated on 26 September; come listen to a sharing by one of our members who has encountered these brothers and sisters, and reflect on what it means to live this Mission. Join us this **Wednesday, 29 September at 8pm**. Email cpg.cosi@gmail.com for Zoom details.

THE SEARCH

What is The Search?

Whether a practised inquirer or a jaded skeptic, *The Search* will speak to all. Some parts will be reassuring, other aspects will challenge the non-believer or out-of-touch Catholic to respond to life's deeper questions that demand an answer.

7 weekly sessions via Zoom video conferencing:

- 1) What do you seek?
- 2) Who are you?
- 3) Why a God?
- 4) What's our story?
- 5) Who is Jesus?
- 6) Am I saved?
- 7) Why a Church?

Starting **1 November 2021, Mondays at 8pm**.

Register via email: de.search.st.igs@gmail.com

Watch the trailer video at vimeo.com/446879132.

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.

The booking for October visits at bit.ly/stigscolumbariumOct2021 will open shortly after 3pm on Tuesday, 28 September.

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

ACTS BATTAMBANG

ACTS Battambang Mission 2021 invites participants and sponsors for its Walkathon & Fundraising Projects. Check out our website for Mission activities happening in Singapore this year at <https://actsbtb.wixsite.com/btb2021/mission>

GATHER TO IGNITE • SEND FORTH TO SHINE MISSION RALLY 2021

The Church is missionary by nature and every baptised Catholic has a part to play in this mission. We are called to reflect Christ's light and radiate it to all people!

Come, join us in ONE at this rally to be inspired and motivated to take up the work. Find out the opportunities for us to further the mission and get challenged to shine Christ's light to all parts of this island and beyond. Be the Church on mission!

Saturday, 2 October 2021, 9.30am to 12.00pm

Register at <https://one.org.sg/event/mission-rally/>



MY PERSONAL MORAL COMPASS 2021

As medical technologies continue to develop rapidly and laws on them are debated, pertinent ethical questions about them need to be asked.

When is the right time to turn off the plug and let a family member die in peace? Is mercy killing ever an option? Is abortion always wrong in all circumstances? Is plastic surgery ethical? Is IVF permissible? Can we redesign babies? Fr David Garcia will explore all these questions, and more, in the **sixth module of My Personal Moral Compass: Stewards of Life**. Come and join us!

Module 6 will start on **7 October 2021** and will be held weekly on **Thursdays over Zoom at 7.30pm** for seven weeks. Register at <https://bit.ly/396NZCT>

For enquiries, please email Caritas Singapore at mPMC@caritas-singapore.org

ASSISI FUN DAY 2021 - E-EDITION

Shop and eat for good at Assisi Fun Day 2021 as we bring the world to you! Enjoy delicious food and exciting products from Asia, America and Europe, "chop" your virtual passports and have fun with games at www.assisifunday.sg from **7-17 October**. Every dollar spent will go towards providing care and comfort for patients with terminal illnesses and their families.



PROJECT CLOVER

We are a group of JC1 students from SJI Independent organising a fundraising and awareness campaign for **Singapore Cancer Society**. Through fundraising, merchandise sales, and ukulele lessons for beneficiaries, Project Clover aims to provide peace of mind for those in need of financial support while they go through treatment.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we ask for your support to raise **\$10,000 by October**. Funds and donations raised will go towards Singapore Cancer Society and their beneficiaries.

Please visit www.giving.sg/campaigns/project_clover or scan the QR code below to support our cause.

Your donation can make a profound difference

Aim of raising \$10,000

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."
2 Corinthians 9:11

Buy our merchandise and more on our Instagram @cloverforhope

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest * Fr Gregory Tan, 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