



The Battle in the Desert of Every Soul

The desert holds many paradoxes. It can be a place of quiet and peace as well as a place of violent and unpredictable sand storms. It can also be extremely barren and dry as well as a fertile ground for Palm Dates and an oasis for the weary traveler. It can be a meeting place for God and the angels as well as the haunt of evil spirits and demons to tempt us. So it is that Jesus should do battle with Satan in the wilderness for forty days among the wild beasts. He was not alone. He had the angels to look after him as mentioned in Mark's Gospel in this Sunday of Lent.

The first lesson of the Desert Fathers that I have learned is to seek God by listening to his gentle voice in the wind. The silence of the desert is haunting. It pierces the depths of one's soul and raises our thoughts to God in the overwhelming realization of the insignificance and fragility of one's life.

So it is that I battled with a pack of eight dogs for my dear life in Balgo out in the Great Sandy Desert of Australia in 2005. It was my third day there when I was "entertained" by the Aborigines from the Balgo region from the Tanami Desert when they gathered together for a Sports Day. I was there for my final leg of my Jesuit training, called Tertianship. Balgo was where the Jesuits had started a mission in 1973 with Fr Brian McCoy SJ who went at the invitation of the Bishop in Broome.

Unfortunately for me, on that day when I was enjoying the Aussie Rules game where the Aborigines played bare-foot on

hard red-pebbled ground for their "field", I was pierced by the sharp sound of a speaker as it was turned on from the main switch. I was sitting directly in the path of the sonic blast that travelled at a speed of light, entering and damaging my right ear in an instant. I did not know what hit me then. I flinched, my face grimacing in pain. Oblivious to the loss of balance in my damaged inner ear, I went for a walk that evening to admire the brilliant sunset. It was as surreal as it was real in its magnificence like a fiery globe set ablaze in red and orange with a pinky hue by the edge.

This brief moment of ecstasy was soon turned into terror as a pack of dogs sensing a potential injured prey in their vicinity, started to surround me as they charged from a nearby house. Soon, there was a show down. It was too much for me. They charged all at once and I did what I could to ward them off but to no avail. I managed to hit one of them on the skull

in between its eyes as it jumped to attack me. But unfortunately, I was oozing blood as I had a piece of sharp stone that cut my middle finger after the punch. When the dust settled, I had more than four bites to testify as my "badge of honour" in surviving the battle in the desert. I am alive today, thanks to my guardian angel (a young aboriginal boy) who heard the commotion and rushed to my rescue after 10 minutes of Kung-Fu fighting! Had it not been for him, I could have been history buried there in the desert.

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I pray that each one of you will learn to listen to the voice of love and hope and help heal the wounds in the desert of pride and unforgiveness in the family and be reconciled to one another.

The PPC Exco,
the Parish Staff and
the Jesuit Community
at Kingsmead Hall
wish all Parishioners
*A Happy Lunar New
Year filled with God's
abundant blessings of
Love and Peace!*

So, it humbles me to think that life hangs always in the balance between light and darkness; between fullness and emptiness; between satisfaction and hunger; between faith and fear and between life and death. Which voice do I listen to each day when I am feel exhausted, distressed, disturbed, despondent and divided?

So I learn to conquer the desert of death by watering it with the Well-spring of life in God's love and providence. I learn to seek out the spring water of hope and consolation in prayer and silent contemplation. And I learn to cast the leaves into the air to see them carried up into the vortex of our faith that wells up like hot water vapour from the desert of desperation in our heart in moments of mortal danger.

With the Chinese Lunar New Year celebration in our midst, I pray that each one of you will learn to listen to the voice of love and hope and help heal the wounds in the desert of pride and unforgiveness in the family and be reconciled to one another. Do you hear the words of Jesus imploring us, "The time has come ...repent and believe in the Good News!" (Mk 1:13). To repent is to turn away from hardness of heart and learn to love and forgive again. Perhaps, the biggest "Ang Pow" you can give this New Year, is that of love and forgiveness.

Fr Colin Tan, SJ

PARISH NEWS

The Holy Father, Pope Francis is calling for a day of prayer and fasting on 23 February, the first Friday of the season of Lent, for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. All Catholics of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are invited to unite themselves with His Holiness in prayer and fasting, which is encouraged but not obligatory.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY ON 25 FEBRUARY

Our Parish will be hosting the RCIA Rite of Election (RoE) for the North, West and City Districts next Sunday, 25 February. We are expecting heavy traffic conditions (including many large buses) along King's Road, from 1.30 pm to 5.00 pm.

Parishioners are requested to kindly clear the carparks immediately after the 12.15pm Mass. Those who wish to attend the 6.00 pm Mass should take note that there may be some traffic congestion.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday during Lent after 7.00am Mass. Before evening Mass at 5.30pm. At 7.30pm for first Friday Mass on 2 March.

LENT REFLECTION BOOKLET

"The Repenting Community", a reflection booklet for Lent by ONE is available at Place of Gathering. You are encouraged to use it in NCCS, prayer groups, ministries and families of the parish. Online version at <http://www.one.org.sg/resources/lenten-reflection-2018/>

LENT BOARDS

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As a sign of your commitment, you may use the materials provided at the Place of Gathering to post your penitential intentions.

SOLI DEO GLORIA (SDG) CHORALE is looking for people who are passionate to praise God with their gift of music. If you are interested, please contact Kelvin John Lim at 9029 4465 or email kelvinjohnlim77@gmail.com

They will also be singing for **Easter Vigil Mass** on 31 March, and are inviting parishioners to join them to await the resurrection of the Lord. Rehearsals are on Fridays of 24 February, 10 and 24 March, 4pm to 5.30pm. Contact Kelvin John Lim at 9029 4465 or email kelvinjohnlim77@gmail.com

SALVE REGINA ORCHESTRA is inviting string/ woodwind musicians aged 10 and above (including adults) to accompany the **Easter Mass**. Rehearsals begin Sunday 25 February. For information, contact ooi.claire@gmail.com.

BIBLE STUDY ON ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Conducted by Msgr Ambrose Vaz
Come, enjoy the Living Word of God. 22 February to 31 May, every Thursday from 8.00pm to 10.00pm at the

Church of St Ignatius, Annexe Hall, level 2. No pre-registration, all are welcome. For more information, email: henrythwu@gmail.com

INFANT BAPTISMS on Sunday 11 March 2017 at 3.00 pm. Parents and godparents are required to attend briefing on Sunday 4 March, 3.00 pm at La Storta Room. Registration forms at church office or website. Please choose a saint's name for your child's baptism. Contact Anthony (9815 9889) & Mariana Heng (9270 8213) or Lea (9173 8717) & Wahjudi Gunawan.

LLOTG 2018 PROGRAM FOR K1 AND K2 begins next Saturday 24 February.
K1: 4.00pm to 5.30pm; K2: 1.30pm to 3.00pm.

WEEKEND CATECHETICAL PROGRAMME

Parents, guardians, youth and children are reminded that sessions will resume next weekend on Saturday 24/Sunday

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL COMMUNITY

Bible Sharing on Mark 6: 6-13. Jesus sent his 12 disciples out on mission and told them "to take nothing for the journey except a staff ..." (Mk 6:8) As we continue to live in God's current of grace, we must also continue to trust in His divine providence in whatever He brings and calls us to. All are welcome this Wednesday 21 February, at St Ignatius Hall from 7.30pm with fellowship dinner and ending at 9.30pm.

RIP NEWS- RISEN IN THE LORD

Caroline Goh - 74 years old
Date of death: 11 February 2018

NCC NEWS

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings start at 8.00pm.

ST AUGUSTINE (A2)

Wednesday 21 February, La Storta room
Programme: Stations of the Cross. Fellowship follows with bread-and-water at Loyola room

ZONE B DISTRICT 3

Friday 23 February, 7.30pm at Temasek Club, Grand Dragon Phoenix Restaurant
Programme: CNY Celebration/Fellowship Dinner

ZONE D DISTRICT 1

Friday 22 February, SH-E
Programme: Stations of the cross and Reflection

ZONE E DISTRICT 3

Thursday 22 February, home of Andrew Tan; 18 Pine Grove, 16-05, Cavendish Park, Singapore 597594
Programme: Mass (celebrant: Fr Jerome Leon)

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Matthew Tan, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Jerome Leon, SJ Assistant Parish Priest

Angela Kurnadi Parish Administrator ★ Joyce Setiawan Parish Accountant ★ Jeremy Aloysius Catechetical Director ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Cheryl Lek Youth Coordinator
Robert Ong Sacristan ★ David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Communications Manager

Love AND Healing

In Mark's gospel, Jesus appears at the Jordan to begin His ministry and receives a blessing from the Father and Spirit filling Him. The Spirit then drives Him into the desert to discern that experience, and Jesus returns to begin his work, calling the first disciples. What follows is the Father and Spirit putting Him into situations where He "must" use them because of who He is.

When He preaches in the synagogue, people are impressed by His "authority", and the demon makes a call on His power that causes Jesus to cast him out — a confirmation of Father's gift of that authority. He simply blesses Peter's mother-in-law, and she rises to serve them. By the end of Sabbath, the crowd calls upon Him to heal their maladies and their demons. **People are calling out for His powerful presence, words and touch** — and I believe that the form and extent of His powers was a revelation to Him, the result of the Father stimulating these people to call upon Him.

In all of these events Jesus is trying to serve the Father quietly, so that people would not have a false idea of Him and His mission. It seems almost as if the Father and the Spirit have a different idea about what Jesus needs. I believe that the Holy Three do the same for us, putting us into situations where we have a chance to reach out and perform small healings, small miracles of love.

CHAS KESTERMEIER, SJ
Jesuit Community
Creighton University

Crammed into the tiny Soyuz capsule, British astronaut Tim Peake and his two crewmates continued to brace themselves. Part one of their spacecraft's journey back to Earth from the International Space Station had just been completed. Explosive bolts blew the craft into three pieces, two jettisoned to be burned up in the atmosphere, leaving the central, spherical module containing the crew.

Plunging towards Earth at 500 miles per hour, with temperatures directly outside the craft at 1,600 Celsius, the first round of chutes — the drogue chutes — were deployed. The drag they produced caused the craft to swing like a toy on a string. 20 seconds later, the swinging stopped as forecasted, but the main parachute did not open as planned. Where was the big jolt that would signal its opening?

Peake was worried. Aware of what should happen at exactly what time, he looked over to the pilot, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko. Peake communicated his concerns with his eyes. "Is everything okay?" was what he was getting at. He knew any mishap at this stage would mean almost instant death.

The response? With eyes still meeting, Malenchenko smiled, reached over and squeezed Peake's hand. Those few seconds of assurance was enough for him to know things would be fine. He knew he wasn't alone. He knew someone was fully aware of what he was going through.

I first heard this story two years ago. It really moved me. It was a concrete example of the power of human connection.

In some Zulu tribes in South Africa, the customary greeting is sawubona, which means "I see you". It's a genuine look to not just acknowledge another, but to actually spend a moment or two to just be with that person. To see his or her situation. I really like that.

Over the years I have been blessed to grow in awareness of how God loves me. One big ah-ha moment came when I felt like God wasn't speaking or revealing Himself to me for about six months. (Or at least not in the manner I was used to.) When Jesus seemingly broke

His 'silence', He assured me that He had always been with me. He was glad I kept on being faithful in seeking Him, even when I couldn't feel Him or see His hand working in my life. I sensed Him saying, "Even when you have not seen, *I* have seen *you*. Even when you have not felt, *my hand* was always upon you."

I learnt a lot from that encounter. The greatest lesson was that God is always present, seeing my situations, and being with me through it all. And as far as I know, there's no indication that is going to change. This truth gives me so much consolation.

These days, when I experience a similar "spiritual dryness", I try to remember this truth. With God's grace, I try and continue being faithful in seeking Him. I share my situation, and if He seemingly says nothing, I just sit and imagine Jesus

seeing me, lovingly gazing at me, with a hand over my shoulder. Most of the time, that is enough for me. No words need to be said. The space between our hearts are abridged.

It is from knowing that I have a God "who sees" (as evidenced in Genesis 16:13), that encourages me to see others too. To see as He does.

In this season of visiting friends and family — people we may not have seen much in the past

year — may we move beyond superficiality and mere pleasantries, to actually see these individuals God has placed in our paths. May we see others' hurts, desires, longings, needs, joys, challenges. In so doing, may the space between our hearts be abridged. You never know who might be feeling like they're plunging to the ground, with seemingly no parachute to save them.

Allow me to summarise with words from author Max Lucado: Could this be God's strategy for human hurt?

First, kind eyes meet desperate ones.

Next, strong hands help weak ones.

Then, the miracle of God.

We do our small part,

He does the big part,

and life at the Beautiful Gates

begins to be just that."

THE GOD WHO SEES

KEITH NEUBRONNER

JESUIT NEWS

HOLY HOUR ON DAY OF PRAYER & FASTING FOR PEACE

Pope Francis has declared 23 February 2018 a day of prayer and fasting for peace given the many ongoing conflicts throughout the world, particularly those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. In the wake of this, Kingsmead Centre will be holding a Holy Hour on that day. This time of Eucharistic adoration and benediction is open to all.

Date/Time: Friday, 23 February 2018/11.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: St. Francis Xavier Chapel, Kingsmead Centre

Jesuit Regional Curia, Telephone: 6469 7356

Fr Christopher Soh, SJ, Fr James Tan, SJ

Kingsmead Hall, Jesuit Community, Tel: 6466 3225

Fr Gerard Keane, SJ, Fr Gerald Tseng, SJ, Fr Charles Sim, SJ, Fr Leslie Raj, SJ, Fr Agustinus Tanudjaja, SJ

Fr Gregory Tan, SJ, Msgr Philip Heng, SJ, Fr Adrian Danker, SJ,

Kingsmead Centre, Tel: 6467 6072 Jesuit Mission Office Tel: 6463 6022

Church Office

120, King's Road, Singapore 268172
or 8, Victoria Park Road,
Singapore 266492

Entrance via 8 Victoria Park Road
Kingsmead Hall (Priests' Residence),
St Ignatius Hall, Sacred Heart Hall,
Kingsmead Centre (for Ignatian
Spirituality & Counselling)

Sunday Masses

Saturday: 6.00pm

Sunday: 6.45am, 8.15am, 10.15am,
12.15pm and 6.00pm

Weekday Masses

Monday – Friday: 7.00am & 6.00pm

Saturday: 7.00am

Confessions

Every Friday & Saturday: 5.40pm

Every Sunday Mass: 20mins
before Mass begins

Infant Baptism (each month)

Briefing for parents & godparents
(compulsory): 1st Sunday, 3.00pm
Baptism: 2nd Sunday, 3.00pm sharp.
Registration forms are available at
front of Church office

Weddings

Couples must make themselves
known to the priest at least 6
months before the wedding.
Contact: Robert Ong (8511 4614)

Columbarium Opening Hours

Daily: 6.30am – 8.00pm

Public Holiday: Closed

Inigo Bookstore

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday:
4.00pm to 6.20pm and during
weekend Masses

Sick elderly and homebound

Please contact the parish office
if help is needed for parishioners
hospitalised (regardless of hospital).
In emergencies, you may also contact
priests' residence at 6466 3225

Bereavement

Please contact the parish office
Sacristan, Robert Ong (8511 4614)
for help and advice before contacting
the funeral director.

**Church of St Ignatius has no official
social media accounts.**

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

LENTEN RECOLLECTION

Organised by the Cenacle Sisters. Sunday
4 March, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm
Choice Retreat House, 47 Jurong West
Street 42 S 649368

"So he got up and started back to the
father." (Lk. 15: 20) How often do we
find ourselves in need of getting up and
returning to the Lord? Let us listen deeply
to the Father's invitation to come back to
His unconditional love.

Contribution: Love offering
only. For registration,
email cenaclemissionsingapore@gmail.com
or go to www.cenaclemission.com

5 DAYS SCRIPTURE-CENTERED SILENT RETREAT

"Jesus — To know Him, To live with
Him, To proclaim Him" with VERBUM
DEI MISSIONARIES.

Where: Verbum Dei Retreat House,
Tagaytay City, Philippines

Dates: 15 to 22 April (includes 2 days of
travel)

Cost: \$950 (flight, lodging, meals,
transport to and fro the airport and
retreat house)

Directed by: Sr Maria Jose and Sr Sandra
Seow

Contact: Verbum Dei Missionaries

@ verbum

deispore@yahoo.com.sg or 6274 0251.

Closing date: 1 March

SURVIVING DIVORCE

An ACF initiative to support separated
and divorced Catholics: to bring hope
and healing for the newly separated,
divorced and people struggling with
the pain and loneliness of a broken
marriage.

Dates/Time: Every Monday, 5 March to
28 May. From 7.30pm to 9.30pm

Venue: CAEC, 2 Highland Road,
Singapore 549102

Contribution: \$120

Enquiries: 9780 4456 (Joann) or 9383

6868 (Jileen) Email: cdsg@acf.org.sg

Register: <http://catholicfamily.org.sg/sd/>

WEEKLY

Rosary in Church

Monday to Saturday, after 7am Mass and
Monday to Friday 5.15pm to 5.45pm,
except first Friday of the month

Intercessory Prayers

Tuesday, 2.30pm in Sacred Heart Hall
Adoration Room, Level 2

Catholic content online, login:

www.FORMED.org; parish code: **4904ed**

Gentle Light

Tuesday, 10am – 12noon in St Francis

Xavier Chapel (Kingsmead)

Thursday, 10am – 12noon in Sacred Heart
Canteen (Room SH-A)

Divine Mercy Devotion

Every Wednesday after 6.00pm Mass in
the Main Church.

Christian Meditation

Friday, 2.30pm in St Francis Xavier

Prayer Room (Kingsmead)

MONTHLY – in Main Church

Sacred Heart of Jesus Mass

Every 1st Friday, 8.00pm (No 6.00pm Mass)

Followed by

**Eucharistic Adoration
by Generation CHRIST!**

Children Eucharistic Adoration

Every 3rd Friday, 7.45pm

Memorial Mass

Every 4th Friday, 6.00pm, followed by
prayers in Columbarium