

contact Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives Singapore (CHARIS), victoria@charis-singapore.org or T: 6337-4119

CATHOLIC THEOLOGY NETWORK - is organizing the following session. Wed, 21 Dec '16, 7.30pm - 9.00pm (begins with Vespers) at St Joseph's Church, Victoria Street, Conference room. Topic title: "Should I read the bible literally"? Principles of interpretation. Synopsis: Can I read the bible as how I would the newspaper? Does God speak to me when I pray to him and flip to a random passage in the bible? Join us as we explore what the Church teaches on biblical interpretation and the spiritual life. Presenter : Amy Matthews. About the presenter Amy has a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) with a major in Biblical Studies, from the University of South Africa (UNISA). She is currently an RCIA presenter in the Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea.

#BRINGACATHOLICHOME - Just one. Would that be you? Or someone you know? That's what we do at Landings. Our mission

is to help reconnect the 'away' Catholic back to Church. To bring Catholics home one at a time. Because you, dear away Catholic, matter to us and matter to Christ. And Maybe its time you revisited the Church you left behind. For 10 Mondays we'll listen to what you have to say and share our perspectives with you - with no judgement and in the strictest confidence. New run begins 1 Feb '17. Contact Leonard Ong (93692100)/Tricia Tay (98631590). Registration closes 23 Jan '17

HOPE 2016 CONCERT - The Good Shepherd Sisters and friends presents a Christmas concert to raise funds for four social social services under Marymount Centre. These services reach out to children, women and families who experience injustice. Enter into the Advent season more fully with us by recognising hope in our lives. Sunday, 18 Dec '16, 7.00pm - 8.30pm at Church of Sts Peter & Paul. Tickets at \$30, \$60, \$100 available through <http://tinyurl.com/2016hope> or contact us at 6256 4440/ Hope2016@marymountctr.org.sg



READINGS: Sunday Missal (Year a) Pg 204

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK: MON 19 December - SAT 24 December 2016

MON: JGS 13:2-7, 24-25A, LK 1:5-25 **TUE:** IS 7:10-14, LK 1:26-38 **WED:** SG 2:8-14, LK 1:39-45 **THU:** 1 SM 1:24-28, LK 1:46-56 **FRI:** ML 3:1-4, 23-24, LK 1:57-66 **SAT:** 2 SM 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16, LK 1:67-79

Reconciliation and Healing

Advent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Lord offers us. Like all religious experience, it takes preparation.

Preparing

Reconciliation is what God does. We prepare for it by opening ourselves up, by reflecting upon the areas of darkness in our lives into which God so deeply desires to shine a light. It might begin with the simple question: Where might God be offering me forgiveness and healing?

If my answer is, "I don't know," then I have some reflection to do. I can examine my life - what I have done and what I have failed to do - and see what graces are offered me there. If I have come through that "era" of saying that any guilt, anything that makes me feel bad about myself, is a bad thing, to be avoided at all costs, then I might have a difficult time coming to genuine sorrow for my sins. If this is the case, I need to "go to work" on my reflection, asking God to rouse a sense of embarrassment, leading to deep sorrow, for any way I may not have been faithful, honest, loving, self-less or generous - in my relationship with God, with my family, with others. I can look at each of my responsibilities - as a citizen of a city

and a country and the world, a neighbour, an employee, a member of a parish or congregation, as a parent or a spouse or as a son or daughter. God will always shine light into these important parts of our lives, to help us experience remorse and a genuine desire for forgiveness and healing. The point here is not ultimately to focus on ourselves. God always reveals us to ourselves, so that God might reveal to us our need for a Saviour. The focus is on God's reconciling, healing love. As John says, "God showed his love for us when he sent his only Son into the world to give us life. Real love isn't our love for God, but God's love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven." 1 John 4:9-10

It may be that I have experienced troubling guilt - coming out of deep childhood trauma or a long-standing sense of shame. This may plague my ability to feel good about myself at all, and therefore to be able to reflect upon my sins - the ways I fail at loving. I can still prepare for genuine reconciliation by preparing to better trust God's love for me, based upon two convictions: First, God's love is unconditional. It is not conditioned on my being better, or my overcoming anything, or even my being good at all. God just loves me. I am always precious in the eyes of the One who made me and desires to embrace me with the gift of complete freedom, in

Sunset Mass	: 5.30pm
Rosary	: 4.30pm (Saturday)
Sunday Masses	: 8.30am (Mandarin), 11.00am (English), 2.00pm (Cantonese), 4.00pm (English)
Weekday Masses	: 7.20am and 5.30pm
Interspersory Prayer	: 7.15pm (English, Thursday)
Infant Jesus Devotion	: 5.30pm (Thursday, followed by Mass)
Divine Mercy Devotion	: 12.30pm (Sunday Mandarin)
Sion Adorers - Holy Hour	: 7.45pm - 8.45pm (Saturday)
Hour of Mercy	: 3.00pm daily
Counselling @ SPP	: 7.00pm - 9.00pm (Monday, call church secretariat 6337 2585 for appointment)
Adoration Chapel	: 8.00am - 9.00pm (Mon to Sat), 8.00am - 7.00pm(Sun)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be administered from 5.00pm - 5.20pm on weekdays and Saturday at the makeshift confessional at the baptistery (back of the church). On Sunday, it will be available 30 minutes before each mass.

Parish Priest: Rev Fr JOHN CHUA OCD (email: hkchuajohn@yahoo.com), Asst Parish Priest: Rev Fr EDWARD LIM, OCD, Priests in Residence: Rev Fr TOM CURRAN, OCD, Rev Fr GREGORY HON, OCD, Rev Fr JOSEPH KOH, OCD and Fr JEFFREY TAN, OCD, General-Delegate: Rev Fr THOMAS LIM OCD, Parish Secretary: Ms Martha Loh, Parish Clerk: Ms Jannie Lui, Liturgical Co-ordinator: Alex Wong, alexdominic@gmail.com

Church Donations - Please make your cheque payable to:
 (i) Church Of Sts Peter & Paul - for contributions /donations for on-going maintenance of our Church or parish projects and Mass offerings; (ii) Church Of SPP Building Fund - for contributions/donations to our Church building fund; (iii) Carmelite Fathers for contributions/donations to the Carmelite Friars (SPP), OCD Missions, Frairs Formation. (iv) Soc of St Vincent de Paul (Conf St Peter) - for donations to the Society of St Vincent de Paul for the poor and needy.

Information is correct at time of publication.

everlasting life. Secondly, God knows everything, including what I am struggling with or suffering under. And, the God of all compassion, understands me and loves me. It may be that my greatest sin - the place where I need the greatest sorrow and desire for forgiveness and healing is my lack of trust in God's complete and unconditional love for me. We can be certain that that is a gift God deeply desires to offer me.

It may be that when I ask myself the question about where God might be offering me forgiveness and healing, I might first come up with a single thing that seems "big" to me. I might say, "I feel sorry for how I treat my spouse or my children." I might focus on a long established habit of self-indulgent sexual fantasy, pornography on the internet or masturbation. I may feel most sorrow for what I fail to do - all the "good intentions" that never make their way into action. It is so important not to stop there. None of the "big" things about which we might immediately feel sorry for sums up all of who we are before God and others. They may be very important in giving some clues or some leads in identifying some larger patterns. For example, if a "big" thing that worries me is that I tend to be "loose" with the truth, at times, I can ask what that means, what it reveals about me. I may discover that the real pattern of sin has to do with a deeper dishonesty or lack of integrity: hiding from God; leading a double life; not being who I really am called to be; trying to manage my life on my own terms; manipulating others for my own needs and desires. When the Light of God's love shines into this level of self-awareness, then I am touched by a powerful experience of reconciliation. Even here, in a place I might be most embarrassed and feel most naked, God is loving me and offering me wholeness and joy.

Celebrating Reconciliation

Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving it and celebrating it is what we do. For those of us who are Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a most natural way to

celebrate God's reconciliation. We used to think of this sacrament as only about "confession" - that it was like a dumping ground for my sins, where I got forgiven, and I had to "pay a toll". One of the great recoveries in our Christian history is to rediscover the meaning of this sacrament.

It is God who forgives sins. And God forgives us the very moment that we come to the experience that we need forgiveness (which itself comes through God's grace). At that moment, I feel sorrow and a desire for forgiveness and healing. In that moment, I am reconciled with God. The reunion, the bond, the connection, the joy are all there. Three more things remain: to receive it deep within my heart, to celebrate it, and to participate in the healing process.

When I experience God's forgiveness and love, I am invited to savour it and let it touch me deeply. Experiencing compassion, patience, understanding, and forgiveness is itself transforming. If I fail to appreciate what I have just received - freely and undeserved - then I will take it for granted and risk moving on without a real healing happening.

Then, I need to celebrate the reconciliation I have received. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation - individually or in common - I have the wonderful opportunity to ritualise that celebration. In the Sacrament, my personal journey is joined with the mystery of God's saving love, as seen in the scriptures, and in God's desire to save us all. There, in ritual form (even if it is just me and the priest) I "step forward" and admit that I am a sinner, express my sorrow, and I name the places in my life where God is shining a Light into what I have done and what I have failed to do. Then, God's forgiveness is proclaimed "out loud" - for me to hear and rejoice in: "May God grant you pardon and fill you with God's peace."

Many parishes offer an "Advent Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation." It is a wonderful opportunity to join our sisters and brother in asking for

forgiveness and healing during this important time of the year.

An integral part of the reconciliation involves the healing process. If I sprain my ankle, the doctor will offer me a number of therapies for healing - ice for the first 24 hours to reduce the swelling, wrapping it, elevating it, and then gradually and carefully using it, until it is healed and strong again. Part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to seek and practice a "remedy" or "medicine" for

Taken from Praying Advent, on Creighton University's Online Ministries web site: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistryonline.html>. Used with permission.

PARISH NEWS

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE - 24 Dec '16: Christmas Eve: 9.30pm (Mandarin), Midnight Mass (Carolling at 11.00pm). 25 Dec '16: Christmas Day: 8.30am (Mandarin), 11.00am (English), 2.00pm (Cantonese), 4.00pm (English)

31 December 2016 - Year End Thanksgiving Celebrations, 4:30pm Solemn Vespers, 5:30pm Mass (in English). There will be a potluck gathering after Mass and all parishioners are invited to join in. If you want to bring food for the potluck, please register with the Church Secretary on the type of food you will be bringing. Please prepare enough food for about 10 persons per dish. Do come and join in the fun!

SPP is planning to embark on the **Emergency Preparedness Programme** and is seeking volunteers who have experience and knowledge in the following areas: security agencies, medical professionals, first aid, emergency planning and management to form a Taskforce. Please leave your name, contact details, your expertise/knowledge area, the Mass/es you usually attend in SPP with the Parish Office. We thank you for stepping forward to help the Parish, for the safety of all our parishioners!

SECOND COLLECTION FOR GIFT ENVELOPES - This weekend, being the third weekend of the month, there will be a second collection to receive your monthly pledges to

the healing I desire. Often that will simply be prayer. Often, expressing my gratitude to God is one of the most important steps on the road to recovery from my independence from God. Sometimes, I will need to practice a therapy that is more carefully planned - making choices about what I can practice doing and what I can practice avoiding.

May our Lord grant us all the gift of reconciliation, and may we all receive it and celebrate it well in the holy days ahead.

Catholic Foundation's GIFT campaign if you are giving by cash/cheque. GIFT is Catholic Foundation's regular giving campaign to fund the numerous organisations involved in families, youths, evangelisation, etc, as well as building projects in the archdiocese. Kindly bring your pledge envelopes with the cash/cheque enclosed and drop them into the collection bags that will be passed around. If you need the pledge envelopes, please ask the Wardens.

THE OFFICE FOR THE NEW EVANGELISATION has produced a booklet of reflections for the season of Christmas in English, Mandarin and Tamil. The theme is "The Joyous Community". Please take a copy of the booklet for your household. You can also find the online copy at <http://www.one.org.sg/resources-for-parishes/>.

CATECHISTS NEEDED - We are still short of 2 catechists for the Secondary level. Anyone who would like to come forward and help in the faith formation for these children can get in touch with the Main Coordinator, Moses via moseskow@gmail.com or 90092226.

NEWS AROUND THE PARISH

CHARIS Mission Trip (12 - 18 Feb '17) - Join us in building a Biosand water filter with the local community in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Slots for 9 participants only. S\$850 per pax. Closing date to register: 13 Jan '17. For more information or to register,