



Christmas
Edition

木 THE 匠 CARPENTER

25th Edition, December 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

**175th
Anniversary Logo**

• Page 2

**Priesthood
Ordination of
Two Disciples
of the Lord**

• Page 4

**Feature
on Family**

• Page 10

**Pandemic
Blessings**

• Page 11

**Rosary Devotion
and Novena**

• Page 14

**2020慕道班
新常态
新旅程**

• Page 16

天主祢在哪里?

• Page 18

FOREWORD

Dear parishioners of St Joseph,

Happy New Liturgical Year!

How apt it is to start our Catholic year with Advent, where we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, our Lord. For it is only with Jesus that we can face our future with hope, peace, joy and love – the themes we celebrate on each of the four Sundays in Advent. The beginning of a year thus offers us the perfect time to root our resolutions and plans in Jesus as we reflect on the past 12 months.



And what a year it has been, living with the COVID-19 pandemic! Whether it has been in our personal lives or in the life of our parish, our plans have gone awry. We've heard of families being separated, studies disrupted, and relationships put on hold.

Looking back, we can take this as a wasted year that we can't wait to see the end of. But nothing is wasted with God. He makes all things good for those who love Him (cf. Rom 8:28).

And what tremendous good has come out of the pandemic!

We've all heard heart-warming stories of the generosity and kindness of people helping those in need. At St Joseph's, we are thankful to the many parishioners and friends who helped us to quickly put together our digital programmes such as online Masses and prayer sessions, and manage our parish life within the restrictions of the pandemic. Even Mother Earth had a respite from our pollution during the lockdowns.

But the biggest learning is that anything can happen in this world and we need to ask ourselves if we are ready to live the adventure of life that God has given to us. Dare we take that leap of faith with Him? Can we see with greater clarity the hand of God in the planned and unplanned events that happen to us?

2021 will also mark a milestone year for St Joseph's Church as we celebrate the 175th year of the founding of our Church. By the providence of God, this year has also been declared the Year of St Joseph. Look out for activities that we will be organising during the course of the year.

May we all have a closer walk with Jesus in 2021!

God bless!

Fr Christopher Lee
Parish Priest

175th Anniversary Logo



A Tribute to St Joseph

- ✦ The golden colour signifies the importance of this milestone year
- ✦ The circular design, like a wedding band, depicts the perpetual vitality and never-ending growth of the Church
- ✦ The iconic building is featured as a hallmark of St Joseph's Church
- ✦ The lilies are an emblem of St Joseph and a sign of chastity
- ✦ The palms bear the meaning of martyrdom
- ✦ The saw and mallet - tools of our humble carpenter - remind us of the simplicity of the life of our Patron Saint
- ✦ The Latin words aptly describe our Patron Saint as "A Just Man, Son of David"



Christmas MIDNIGHT MASS

25TH DECEMBER 2020



CHRISTMAS EVE 10pm Mass



CHRISTMAS EVE 8pm Mandarin Mass





*Blessed
Christmas*

Wishing all
Parishioners a very
Happy, Holy and
Spirit-filled Christmas.

*Rejoice,
for unto us
a Saviour is born!
Hallelujah!*

Our dear Sisters and Brothers,

This year has been a very challenging one, due to COVID-19. We have had to adapt to many changes and make many sacrifices. Despite all this, our faith has kept us strong.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our unsung heroes who have given their time and talents to help keep our Masses going; and our operations afloat. Our special thanks to:

- **The Mass Recording team** who started from ground zero (using their own equipment) and have now gained experience to telecast our Masses so professionally and yet at minimal cost to the Church;
- **The Hospitality Ministry and the volunteers** who have stepped forth to ensure that we comply with the safe management measures so that our Masses can continue;
- **The benefactors** who have donated to the Church to help cover our expenses;
- **All those** who have silently assisted in one way or another to keep things going.

We would also like to thank all parishioners for your patience and understanding and adapting to the many requirements laid down.

Above all, we give our thanks to God for His many blessings and for the gift of His only beloved Son, Jesus.



SJC Mass Recording Team



Live Recording of the Midnight Mass

木 THE 匠 CARPENTER

The Carpenter MCI (P) 003/06/2020 is a publication of St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah); and is for internal circulation only.

Please send correspondence to:
sjcpastoral@outlook.com

Spiritual Directors:

Fr Christopher Lee
Fr Peter Zhang

Editorial:

Cecilia Lee
Claudia Ng
Evelyn Lau
Joseph Edwin D'Cruz
Dr Rilly Ray
Theresa Khoo
Thomas Audi Tan
Wendy Chan
Wilson Chew

Guest Editor:

Peter Ling

Photography:

SJC Media Group

Printer:

MontPrint Creative Services

STAY CONNECTED

✉ sjcpastoral@outlook.com

🌐 stjoseph-bt.org.sg

📘 facebook.com/sjcbt

📺 SJC Bukit Timah

Priesthood Ordination of Two Disciples of the Lord



Newly ordained Fr Mark Ma, CDD (left) and Fr Luke Zhang, CDD (right)

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Monday 14 September 2020, Mark Ma Shuai (33) and Luke Zhang Wei Gang (34) - members of the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord (CDD) - were ordained to the ministerial priesthood.

The ordination liturgy took place at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and was presided over by His Grace, Archbishop William Goh.

Despite COVID and the absence of the usual chanting of hymns and melodious liturgical music, the ordination Mass that day was solemn and uplifting.

Archbishop Goh's words of exhortation to the newly ordained priests were also very moving and inspirational. The prelate reminded them to always carry out the ministry of Christ the Priest with "constant joy and genuine love".

Fr Mark shared that he wishes to be a priest who will "help people in their spiritual life, especially to help them pray", while Fr Luke shared that he hopes to be a priest who will be a "true shepherd" to the flock of God.

When asked how he felt upon receiving news that he would be ordained, Fr Mark shared that he was very excited because he didn't expect to be ordained as a priest at this particular time, but believed that this was part of God's plan for him to be a witness for Him now.

Similarly, Fr Luke shared that he too felt excited and glad when he received news of the ordination. However, his only regret was that his parents and family members could not be present to witness the ceremony.

As to the kind of priests which they hope to be in the future, Fr Mark shared that he wishes to be a priest who will "help people in their spiritual life, especially to help them pray", while Fr Luke shared that he hopes to be a priest who will be a "true shepherd" to the flock of God.

Indeed, we are all truly grateful that even with the onslaught of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, God still provides the pilgrim church with faithful priests to help administer His Word and Sacraments.

We thank God for the gift of both these new priests and also thank them for answering the Lord's call to serve.

Their witness is a sign of joyful hope and an invitation to us to put our faith into action in serving God and our sisters and brothers everywhere.



Ministries in St Joseph's Church



The Church cannot stand without the support of various Ministries who help to make the Mass possible and build a community that we can call our own.

"Ministry" is from the Greek word diakoneo, meaning "to serve" or douleuo, meaning "to serve as a slave." This call to serve takes as its example Jesus who washed his disciples' feet as a symbol of humility.

It might surprise you that we have some 50 ministries, rendering services from faith formation to family life to pastoral services.

The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few, so if you feel called to serve, please reach out to the respective Ministry Heads whose contact details are on the church website.



Post-COVID, we will be rejuvenating our Ministries and calling for membership, so come and play a part in building our Church and serving our Community.



English RCIA 2019-2020: Sacraments of Initiation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no grand celebration for the Sacraments of Initiation for the RCIA 2019-2020 Elects at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Thankfully the Rite of Election for our Catechumens was held in our Church on 1 March 2020 before the suspensions kicked in.

With the gradual resumption of religious activities, the long awaited Sacraments of Initiation was eventually celebrated on Monday, 10 August 2020. A total of 29 elects were baptized, 5 candidates were received and 2 were confirmed. This was divided over two sessions to adhere to the number of persons permitted at each event.

Fr Christopher Lee celebrated the first session at 9am and Fr Peter Zhang presided at the second session at 12pm.



Despite being a quiet ceremony, the occasion was kept simple yet beautiful. Let us warmly welcome all our Brothers & Sisters who are newly baptized, received and confirmed into the family of St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah).

Advent Special and Christmas Montage



Thomas & Teresa Teo



Jullie Anne & Judy Claire Tupaz



Ranjith & Charlot Family

Our very talented crew produced two videos: The Advent Special and the Christmas Medley by choirs from all the Masses.

Special thanks to:

Music director and producer, Kira Goh;

Sound engineer, Yoom Truong;

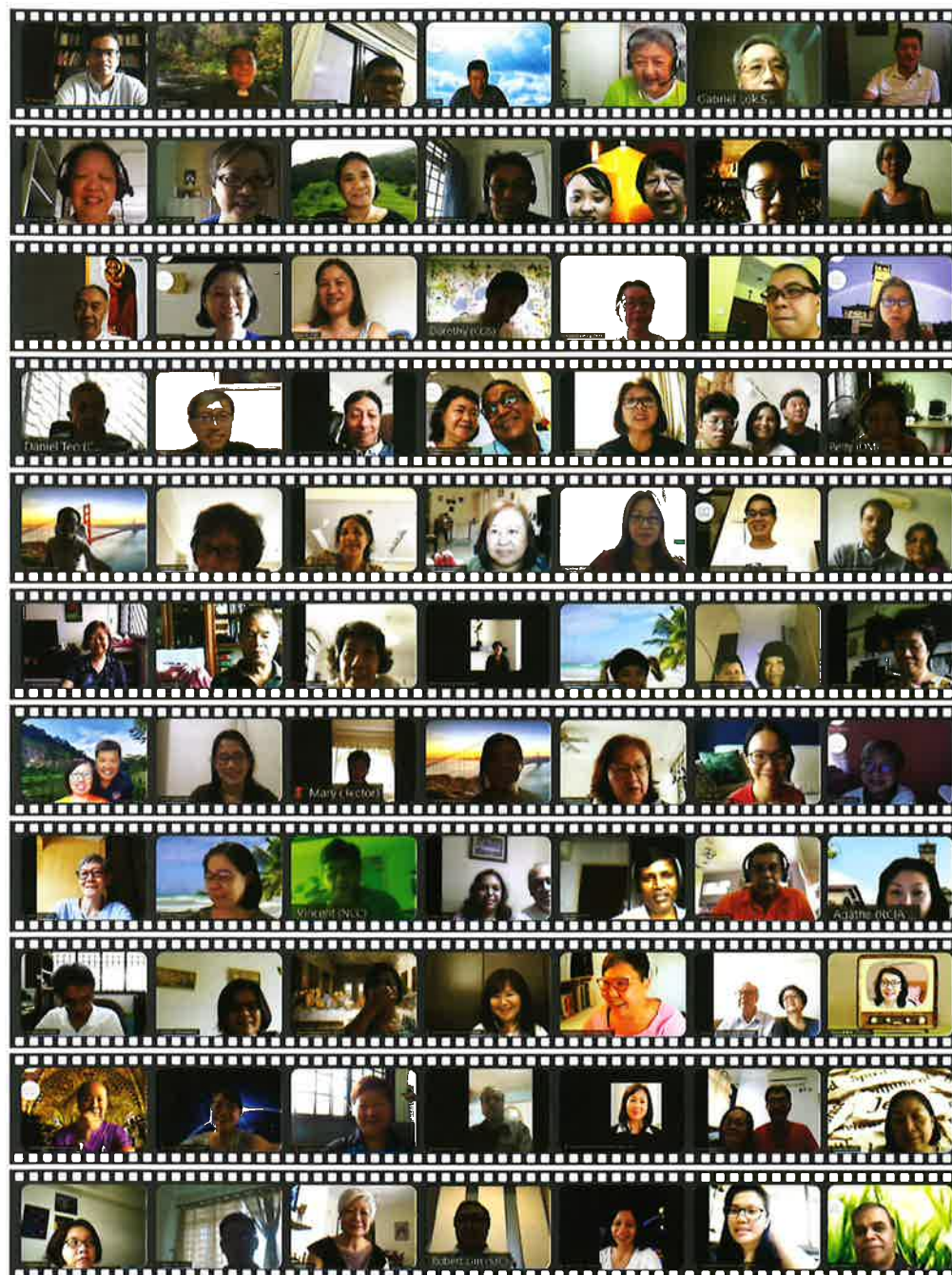
Video Editor, Eldon.

You can view the videos on our Church Facebook.



2020 Day of Recollection

Strengthening the Community in light of COVID



All of us, including the Church, have to accept and adapt to a new normal. There is no going back to old ways. This pandemic serves as a valuable opportunity for pastoral conversion.

Held on 14 November 2020, the Day of Recollection led by Fr Gerard Louis, CSsR and Fr Terence Wee, CSsR took place virtually.

The discussion included the mission of the parish, ministries, neighbourhood groups, the family and the individual in the post COVID-19 church.

Fr Terence kickstarted the session and focused on how we can live out our faith during these challenging COVID times. Fr Gerard continued the session by touching on what the parish needs to do differently in order to bring our families back to the Church.

There was active participation from the attendees and many shared their thoughts and views on the matter.

Participants of the 2020 Day of Recollection

All Souls Day



This year, All Souls Day took a different format due to COVID. Regardless, it was a poignant ceremony to remember the souls of all our dearly departed loved ones.

The Mass was livestreamed from The Chapel of the Resurrection and was followed by the blessing of the columbarium. Petitions were received online and offered during the Mass. The day ended with prayers led by the Divine Mercy Prayer group.

Those wishing to relive the occasion can still view the video at this link: <https://youtu.be/lfD4P2Wy4no>

Lectors' Day of Recollection



The Lectors' Ministry which serves at the weekend English masses, is a family of about 30 odd members. Each of us serves at 2 masses monthly on average. We meet fortnightly on Friday evenings to share and reflect on the Word of God, using the upcoming weekend's readings and taking turns to 'practise read' the readings to tackle the technicalities (articulation, pronunciation, tone, etc). Even though most of us have to come after a workday, tired and hungry, we still continue to do it as we clearly understand the need to keep growing in God's Word and to prepare well for our service to God and His people at each mass.

In the midst of all that is happening around us, we recently managed to have our annual Day of Recollection on 21 November 2020 led by Friar Joseph Nathan.

With God's grace and the assistance from the parish team, we had a fruitful Recollection with Friar Joe leading us through our reflection with questions that got us thinking why we decided to serve as a lector in the first place. One very good point for reflection that struck most of us was how we are constantly undergoing training and learning in other aspects of our lives willingly but feel that we need not do the same in our ministry as a lector.

The lectors who attended the Day of Recollection felt that it provided a good grounding to the responsibility, character and faith seeking qualities of a lector and a timely reminder of why we chose to be a lector in the first place.

We look forward to continually serving God and His people in St Joseph's Church (BT).

First Holy Communion 2020



2020 was a challenging year for all of us. Due to the pandemic, catechism sessions were held on ZOOM. The annual First Holy Communion celebration, which was supposed to be celebrated on the Feast of Corpus Christi in June, had to be postponed too.

The celebration for a total of 82 children had to be split into three separate Masses on 21 November.

Nevertheless, the First Holy Communion celebration was a success and we thank everyone who was involved in it.



Couples Ablaze With Love



Charles and Kirsten Lim share their experience of being re-energized in their love for God and one another.

The Couple Empowerment Programme (CEP) that was launched in August 2019 in St Joseph's Church has proved to be a turning point for many families, including our own. It was a spiritual awakening to the understanding of the sacrament of marriage and the response needed to grow deeper in love with God and one another.

Bernard and Ying Thio, the main presenters of the programme, took 42 couples from St Joseph's and other parishes through a Christ-centred 10-session journey of rediscovery and revisiting what we thought we already knew about being married. Some of the paces we were brought through included the understanding of our family of origins, the importance of still having "dates" even though we were married, and the importance of sharing honest feelings and listening to one another.

It not only changed our own perception of our own families but also opened our eyes for the need of a community of families coming together to break the Word and share lives. The CEP team were testament to that. Never complaining and always giving, they were living up to the Lord's invitation to us at the end of Mass to "glorify the Lord by our lives". Week in and week out, they served us as facilitators, as servers of food, tended to logistics and literally showed us how families can support families.

As a newly-formed community in St Joseph, we are grateful for the opportunity to experience this love. In turn, we want to share this life-changing experience with others. In His time and by His will, may we be able to build a community of families supporting one another in St Joseph's Church too.



It not only changed our own perception of our own families but also opened our eyes for the need of a community of families coming together to break the Word and share lives.





God Fills Us All

A reflection on family relationships through the finding of Jesus at the temple

We are often filled with, and motivated by, many desires. They pull us in many directions and guide many of our choices. In the Bible, Genesis tells us that God gave us everything He created and that we would be perfectly happy dwelling in His presence and following His ways. However, our first parents, Adam and Eve, chose to fill themselves with the lies of Satan. They had a deep desire which only God can fulfil, but they thought God a liar and they chose to believe Satan. God warned that they would 'certainly die' (Gen 2:17) if they disobeyed Him and they really did die. They died a spiritual death, where they were separated from the deep and intimate union they had with God. This is worse than physical death. So much can be affected by following our malformed desires and not properly ordering them to God.

In our family lives, both children and parents, too, are motivated by many desires. We both want the best but often these desires come into conflict. Parents may think their children do not know what's best for themselves and that they alone have the answers. Children too are often motivated by their own desires and wants. They want to have fun and enjoy life. Older children want to be independent, which can frequently lead to disagreements.

Amidst all this confusion of competing desires, let us look at the story of Jesus in the temple as a guide. Jesus is found missing after the Passover feast and Mary's first question coming from a place of deep concern is, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you' (Luke 2:48). Presuming that Mary and Joseph had previously instructed Jesus to stay close to them, they had hoped that Jesus would be obedient to their wishes. They were motivated by a desire to protect their son.

Jesus is pointing to the fact that our desires and longings can only be fulfilled in God's house and not through our own manipulations.

Jesus, however, responds by saying 'Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' (Luke 2:49). Jesus is an example for us here. His only desire is to dwell in God's presence. It might seem rude that Jesus is telling his parents there is another 'Father's house' apart from their own. But fundamentally, Jesus is pointing to the fact that our desires and longings can only be fulfilled in God's house and not through our own manipulations. There really is no other place to be than in the Father's house and dwelling in God's presence.

As the psalmist cries, 'For better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere' (Psalm 84:10), so there is an infinite longing for God within us. This cannot be satisfied by forcing down our ideals on others, by trying to savour the best the world can offer us or even by ignoring or suppressing the longing. We are children of Adam and Eve, but let us not follow our first parents in desiring something other than God. Let us follow the example of the child Jesus and always say, **'I had to be in my Father's house.'**

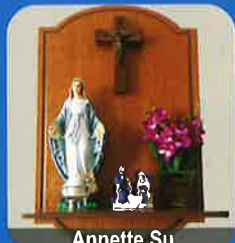
Family Altars Amidst Covid



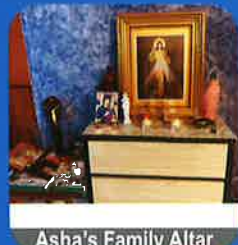
Ana Tongco



Andrew Chua



Annette Su



Asha's Family Altar



Caroline Michael



Colond Family Altar



Doreen Low



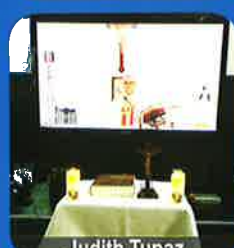
Ellen Imatong



Jose and Nyttle



Joyce Solano



Judith Tupaz



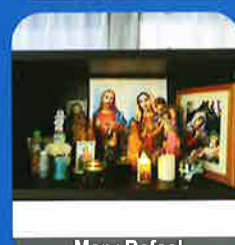
Lorna Tan



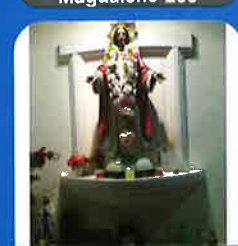
Magdalene Lee



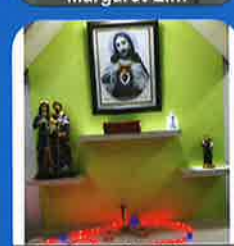
Margaret Lim



Mary Rafael



Patricia Martin



Priya Ranjith



Ramon Family Altar



Ranmali Family Altar



Tay Family Altar



Veronica Goh

Spiritual Infection During COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has surprisingly been a blessing for me.

I actually developed spiritually after the cancellation of masses from 15 February, and during the virus 'circuit breaker' between 7 April to 1 June 2020.

Firstly, digital access meant that I could attend daily masses in different cities. Since weekday mass was available in the afternoon at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Singapore, I sometimes followed earlier online masses streamed by St Barnabas Parish in Chicago; Holy Family Church in Doveton, Melbourne; National Catholic Broadcasting Corporation in Ontario; St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne; and St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. Through the St Mary's mass, I learned that Mother Mary has been the Patroness of Australia for 200 years! However, my favourite daily mass site is from the Doveton parish, whose link I have shared with fellow lectors in St Joseph's Church and Novena Church.

Secondly, I developed a greater interest in Marian apparitions around the world. It was fascinating to learn from The Miracle Hunter website a list of Our Lady's appearances from the year 40 A.D. to the 20th Century. I had been more familiar with Marian apparitions in Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje, so it was an eye-opener to learn about Asian apparitions, such as in Akita, Japan.

Thirdly, I expanded my spiritual knowledge of Genesis patriarchs from Adam to Jacob; genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to Joseph; and the timeline of Popes from St Peter to Pope Francis. I had a better context of Noah (10th generation after Adam) and Abraham (20th generation after Adam).

Fourthly, I gained from watching Christian movies about Christ, St Peter, St Paul, St Patrick, St Augustine, Padre Pio and Ruth, the great grandmother of King David. I watched 'The Story of Ruth' twice as I was really intrigued by how the pagan priestess became a Christian convert (and eventual author of the 'Book of Ruth' in the Old Testament).

Hence, I will remember COVID-19 as my spiritual infection of a more Christ-like life!

Peter Ling (Lector, St Joseph's Church)

Count Your Blessings

In the midst of the pandemic, we trust that God has His plan and will see us through. Our parishioners have come forward to share their silver linings during this period.

"Who is my Neighbour?"

Just to share that through this pandemic, I have learnt to share food with my neighbour. My immediate neighbour is a Muslim family. They are struggling even before the pandemic.

It all started when we bought a whole honeydew melon. I realised that it's too much for us. While my husband was giving my neighbour's grandchildren chocolates as usual, a sudden thought came to me.... share with them the fruit. From then on, we have been sharing with them fruits, canned food, rice etc. We have been neighbours for more than 10 years, yet it took a pandemic for us to learn about sharing food with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

We may be of a different race, a different faith....in the eyes of God, we are all God's children.

Parishioner of St Joseph's Church, 12 May 2020

Alas, half a year has gone by. Almost every continent has been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

People who have been afflicted are suffering and so are the rest of us. It has affected everyone, either physically, emotionally or financially. It is sad.

But upon reflection, it could be a blessing in disguise. God has given us this 'break' for us to ponder over why this is happening. To take things slow and reflect on how we can improve. We tend to take things for granted: our family, friends and most of all, God.

Now, with this pandemic still ongoing, we have come to realise the importance of family and friends. We cannot meet our loved ones who do not live with us. Worst of all, we miss attending Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist. We miss God terribly.... there is something missing in our life.

Fortunately for technology, we can still see and talk to our loved ones, friends and best of all, still hear the word of God through live streaming of Masses. Although we can't receive Him sacramentally, we can still do it spiritually. We have to continue to pray and ask our Lord to help us fight on against this COVID-19.

As for me, I count my blessings that I can feel God watching over me and my family. I am very thankful for all His blessings. I have learnt to appreciate God more during this period which leads to my praying the Rosary more often and reading the Bible (something which I didn't have much time for earlier) and treasuring my family even more, with this 'extra' time given, bonding with them. This will now be the new 'normal' for me. All said and done, I hope this pandemic blows over quickly and everything goes back to normalcy. I miss seeing all my sisters and brothers in Christ.

When Mass resumes, I hope all of us, Hospitality members, will continue to serve the Lord, wholeheartedly with love and gusto. May He continue to give us His guidance in serving His people.

Stay vigilant, safe and healthy always.

Paul Teo, 24 May 2020

In everything that happens, God has His Plan. I firmly believe that.

During this circuit breaker period, I have come to appreciate what God had intended for me. Having been in the workforce for 30 years, my focus had always been on my career. God has given me this reprieve to spend time with my family – in the peace and solitude of our home, we now have time to share a family meal together and pray together. Being able to "sleep in" is also an added bonus.

I thank God for keeping my family safe, but at the same time, I am also humbled by the many heroes who have been risking themselves for others. We will pray for them daily that they and their families too will be safe.

Parishioner of St Joseph's Church, 15 May 2020

It's really difficult to think about blessings when the whole world is filled with dreaded news and reports of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information of new infections, death toll statistics, what to do, what not to do etc., are flowing in and then the unprecedented announcement of the closure of places of worship added fuel to the fire. Is anyone even being optimistic and counting our Lord's blessing in this atmosphere of fear?

The answer may seem 'No'. However, reality kicked in and people started to experience change in their lifestyles for good. In the past, five hours of sleep daily used to be the norm. But now, it has increased to seven (some even taking naps in the afternoon). The dream of attending mass together as a whole family had become a reality due to the online streaming of Mass with the help of the Archdiocese. Family time, which was a rarity for us (since most of us were overseas), had suddenly become a daily thing. Nothing else seemed necessary, when there were cooking competitions, board games, exercise, movie times, online classes, online catechism, online retreat and the list goes on. Everything was happening in our family. Of course, this was only made possible because of the sacrifices and selflessness of the workers and medical staff who are fighting the battle in the frontline. May God bless them and their families abundantly.

My family too, had our share of worries. Since I was in China where the disease was peaking, I had to go for self-quarantine after my return. Every one of those 14 days was filled with anxiety. Not too long later, our son and daughter returned from overseas with a mandatory SHN, while waiting for the test results at the same time. In the end, we could just say that it has been the Lord's blessing that we are safe from the virus.

Jose and Nyttle

Keeping the Faith

What we once took for granted in being around one another is now a challenge to achieve in a world with COVID-19. During this time of physical separation, it is more important than ever to stay connected as a family in God. Amid this time of trial, our community continued to “get together” virtually, keeping the faith through prayers.

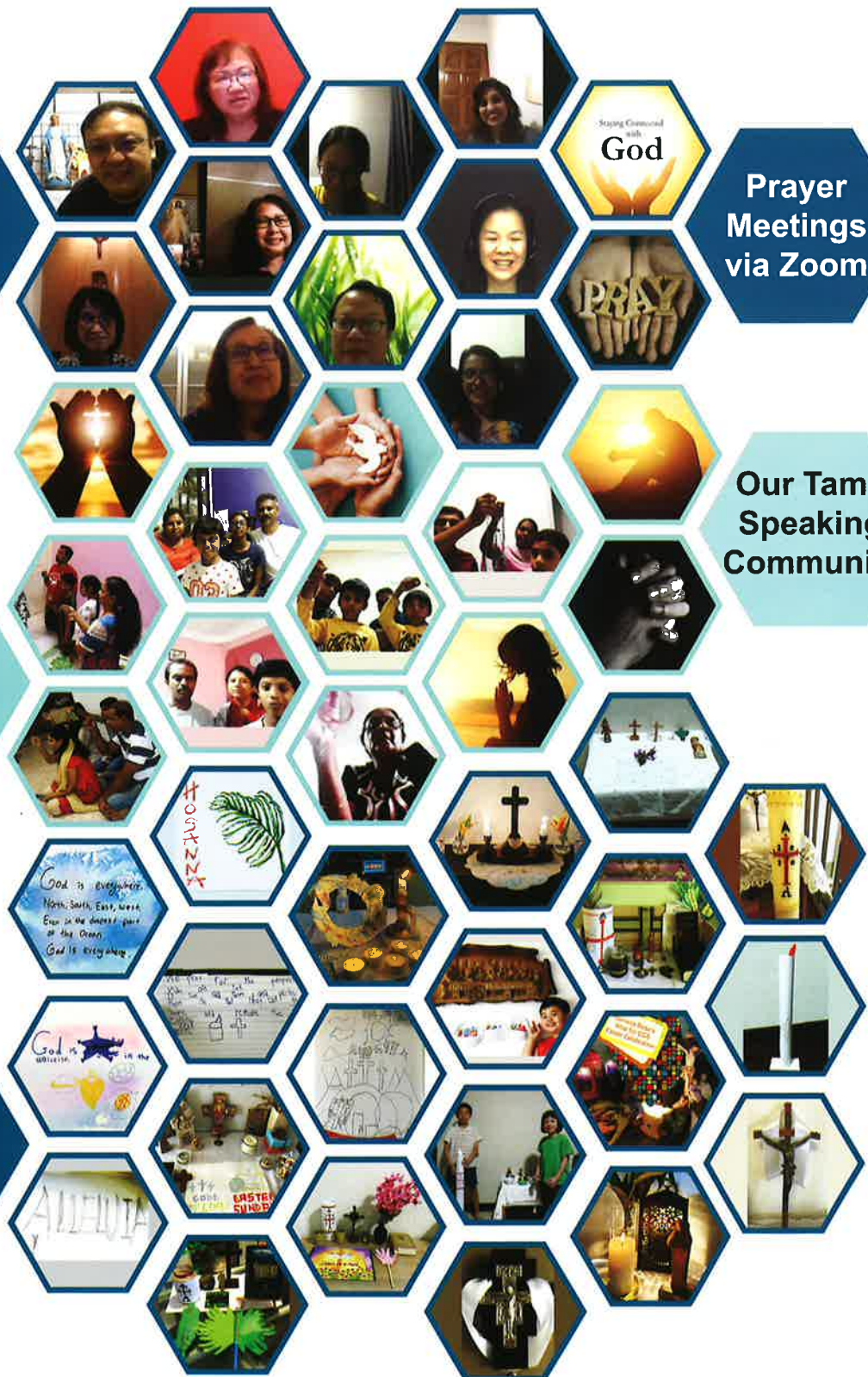
**Legion
of Mary**

**Prayer
Meetings
via Zoom**

**JMJ
Rosary
Group**

**Our Tamil
Speaking
Community**

**Catechesis
of the
Good
Shepherd**



Rosary Devotion and Novena

In anticipation that the annual procession for the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary could not take place in 2020, a novena was initiated that culminated on the Feast day on Wednesday, 7 October. The Rosary was led by the various Ministries in the Parish and also with the involvement of the SFXMS seminarians and the religious communities in our midst.

**"I am the Lady of the Rosary
I want you to continue
praying the Rosary every day."**

**6th apparition of Our Lady of Fatima
October 13, 1917**



法蒂玛圣母

To Jesus, through Mary

WEEK	LEADS	THEMES
1	Prayer Groups: LOM, Divine Mercy	Employment and Careers
2	Ministries: Lectors, EMHC, Hospitality, AV	Family Harmony
3	Ministries: Choirs and Altar Servers	All Souls
4	Ministries: Catechists (CGS, Pri, Sec) and RCIA	For our Students
5	Seminarians	Promulgation of the Faith
6	Ministries: SSVP, Canteen, PBG, GLAD, Pastoral Care, ACT	Economy
7	Ministries: Youth, NCC, Media	Healthcare Professionals and Frontline Personnel
8	International Communities	For Foreigners and Migrants
9	Religious	Promotion of the Family Rosary

Week 5: Rosary Devotion Led by our SFX Seminarians



ADVENT 2020

The Advent season looked very different this year and we had to celebrate Advent in a modified manner. But the season was still celebrated in meaningful ways.

Advent Reflections

1st Sunday of Advent
Facilitated by Fr Christopher Lee
Saturday 25 Nov 2020 @ 8.30 pm

Prepare your family wreaths and join the priests of the Parish and together we will light the first Advent candle.



Precious Lord, as I embrace this Advent season, please open my eyes to see the great value and blessing of your incarnation at Christmas. I desire to see, understand and experience the profound effects that incarnation has on my life and I desire to receive those effects more fully this Advent. May I become a sanctuary in which you dwell so that I, like your mother, may bring your presence into the world. Amen!

Lighting of Candles

The fourth week of Advent we remember the gift of love we have in Christ. The light of the candles is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us. Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's love in human form. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."







Advent Reflections

	THEME	SPEAKER
1st Sunday of Advent	Sunday of Hope	Fr Christopher Lee
2nd Sunday of Advent	Sunday of Peace	Fr Joseph Nathan
3rd Sunday of Advent	Sunday of Joy	Fr Peter Zhang
4th Sunday of Advent	Sunday of Love	Bro Dominic

From the Latin word Adventus, meaning "coming," Advent is marked in the four weeks leading to Christmas. It is a time to remember that Jesus promised to come again.

During Advent, the priests and religious led prayers and reflections, to prepare us for Christmas.

Lighting a candle in the darkness is a powerful symbol of hope.

Throughout the Advent season, families were encouraged to make their own family wreath.

During Advent Reflection, the families simultaneously lit their Advent Wreath when the priest lit the Advent Wreath in Church.



2020慕道班 新常态 新旅程

韦海霞、苏进珠、梁雅翠

一、新常态 新福传

谁也没有想到2020年会是在诚惶诚恐中度过，更没有想到圣若瑟堂第28届慕道班还能如期举行。

新冠疫情肆虐，圣堂关闭，难道传扬福音的脚步就要停止了吗？不！虽然疫情破坏了如常在圣堂开办的慕道课程，但天主的恩典总不停息，在圣神的启迪下，经慕道团神师及全体团员的商议后，决定转型——由实地开课转成在线上课。尽管这不是最好的上课方式，但有碍於目前的敏感情况；重要的是找到创意的方式，能继续进行信仰培育的途径。虽然这里面困难重重，但难关难过关过，这背后不是有主的力量在推动我们吗？耶稣说：“你要做捕人的渔夫……划到深处去，撒你们的网捕鱼罷！”（路5:10,5:4）



与此同时，张神父鼓励大家每周三晚共同颂念玫瑰经，求圣母为此意向转祷。大家心火炎炎，主里合一，分工合作，并制作了海报，各尽其职、各尽所能、努力宣传，寻找并邀请还尚未认识主的

人来赴主的婚宴。“那含泪播种的人，必含笑收获收成；他们边行边哭，出去播种耕耘，他们载欣载奔，回来背着禾捆。”（咏126: 5-6）接下来就把一切交托给天主安排了。求主赐恩宠给一切蒙召旨意来寻求祂的人，阿们！

7月9日当晚8点，慕道班第一次新常态线上（zoom）聚会。当晚出席者多达78位，非教友占24位。感谢天主！一切都是在井然有序下进行，从敬拜赞美—安排课程—中途休息—结束—下期聚会的准备，就像天主用7天创造了天地万物一样的完美。

神师张思谦神父，讲员张伟刚神父、马帅神父、黄贵娟修女、高玉宝修士和林淑芳姐妹都竭尽全力，在面对新的挑战，以新的方式来分享信仰。透过他们的带领，问道者了解了基督徒现世生活的价值观，也在生活中体验天主的伟大、慈爱和美善；认识基督的使命、教训、奇迹和他死而复生的奥迹等。学习了四个月，时候到了，张神父于是决定11月19日在圣堂里举行慕道者收录礼。



二、面试



10月31日及11月1日，问道者亲临圣堂与神师进行面试；之后，核心小组带领他们参观堂区各场所，讲解各个角落的来龙去脉及用途等；虽然天气酷热，却挡不住一颗颗渴望探索的心，询问声此起彼伏，大家互相学习，交流得不亦乐乎。最后在玫瑰苑圣母像前一齐祈祷，把一切心思意念交在圣母手中恳请代祷，并在圣母像前拍照留念。

三、收录礼

11月19日，星期四，收录礼当晚，天不作美，下了一场豪雨。一连串的会不会骤然涌上心头，会不会有人因而打退堂鼓？会不会因路上塞车而迟到？哎唉！真叫人担心呢！“求吧！这一切自会加给你们的（玛6:33）”。瞬间雨渐渐停了，大伙儿心里感觉踏实多了。问道者的陆续来到、服务人员、核心组员、陪同员等上下一心、各就各位；瞬间整个圣堂冷冷的空气里充满了暖气，这温馨一目不就是上主所悦纳的吗？

当晚，出席的问道者共有22位，礼仪由张思谦神父主持。举行收录礼时还有陪同员的陪伴，构建一个彼此交流，加深友谊的机会，也使大家感受到教会大家庭的温暖与关爱。在礼仪中，张神父对问道者来教会寻求信仰表示欢迎，期望教友们在今后的信仰旅途中，尽量帮

助、鼓励和支持问道者皈依天主。在礼仪中，问道者也以“我愿意”来回应张神父的询问，并庄严地在天主台前、在神父及众人面前许诺，愿意学习天主教理，以基督精神，努力改善自己，为基督作证；再者，一个个问道者到祭台前去，神父在每位的额头上划上了神圣的十字圣号。从此他们的身份就是慕道者了。之后，张神父向圣经洒水并降福，慕道者郑重地接过神父授予的福音，承诺将努力学习以圣经作为生活的指导，不懈地完成慕道旅程，来日领受水和圣神的洗礼。同时，也赠送每位祈祷小册子和玫瑰念经，勉励他们培养祈祷的习惯。玫瑰念珠还是张爸爸亲手为慕道者制作的。在礼仪中，慕道者和陪同员以信经向天在宣发信仰，整个收录礼在庄严且隆重中的举行。



礼成，大家彼此祝福，表示在天主的降福下，慕道者收录礼圆满结束。在回家之前，有几位慕道者透露他们是第一次接触天主教会的。有一位分享说在这几个月的学习中，他感受到天主的临在和教会爱的精神，因此决定跟随基督，加入教会；表示今后要好好学习圣经，领会福音精神。另一位说张神父证道时讲到：在入水时是一个有罪的人，从水中出来便是重生之人；为她而言是以往的过错与遗憾，已成过去，不须强求；一切从新开始，相信天主自有安排。

四、祝福

愿慕道者一步步的皈依基督，在主内快乐成长，接受圣洗，成为天主教徒，度圣善的信仰生活，获享丰盛的人生。



2020年8月10日 第27届慕道者领洗了

第27届的候洗/候选者，在疫情之间虽经过了一波三折；
阻断不了他们对真理的追求与渴望，不受干扰，
终于步上领洗水坛接受圣洗。



为信的人，一切都是可能的！(谷9:23)

天主祢在哪里？

林秋红

日前，我接到了一则英文简讯，标题是“别错失这场疫情”(Don't waste this epidemic) 内容大意是“天主容许这场疫情，祢有其旨意”，简讯的内容让我深有感触。

我们一家五口，再加上缅甸女佣、一只鹦鹉、四条金鱼，从来都没有这么亲密地生活在一起，但因为这场疫情，我们朝夕相对，寸步不离，对彼此的生活有了更深一层的认识。

先生是工程师，在家工作，让我无意中窥探了他的工作情况及所结交的朋友。困在家中的日子，我们夫妻俩除了每周上两次网上神学证书班外，还参与每晚930分的公诵玫瑰经，祈求圣母的庇护，并为我们转求。

在家的这段日子，先生与我对话的时间增加了，有时他会与我分享对某个新闻话题或对天主教某些学说的看法，他也邀请我陪他一起看电视节目。我们家的电视一直是先生独占，看哪个节目也得由他决定，但困在家中的日子，先生会陪伴我看我爱看的波道。“岁月静好”，家是温馨、温暖的！

我是一名学校老师，工作非常忙碌，这次在家工作，家人总算见识到我的忙是有意义的，而不是“盲”。平时，我的三个宝贝因为工作、学习也时常早出晚归，我们见面匆匆，一天下来谈不上几句话，儿子有时还夜归，我也因此睡得很不安稳。疫情的爆发，把这些年轻人都关在家里，每天晚上每当我睡觉时想到三个宝贝



都在家里，隔天一早睁开眼睛时又见到他们，我心里就觉得特别的踏实。

在家中的日子。两个女儿认为我为她们准备的餐点太丰盛了，时常嘱咐我不要为她们准备，但我总是充耳不闻，不精厨艺的我，总是叫了好多米其林的美食让大伙儿大快朵颐！儿子在家的日子变得懂事多了，他主动整理房间，把许多废物给丢除了，整个房间焕然一新！他还把自己的房门及我们的房门擦得干干净净！困在家中的日子，先生与孩子们玩了好多游戏，其乐融融，看见一家人欢欢喜喜地在一起，我的心里是无比的宽慰！家中的圣母像也仿佛笑意盈盈地俯视着美好的场景。要不是这场疫情，一家人怎么会有这么多时间腻在一起？感谢天主！

由于我们一家都在家里，为了不給女佣压力，我再三嘱咐女佣多休息，别理会我们，因此只要该完成的家务事都完成了，她就去休息。将心比心，谁都想过好日子，离乡背井到陌生的国度工作真是不容易，在家的日子，可以向她表

示我们对她的感激之情，因此，体谅与多关怀她是必然的。

我们家没有因为这场疫情受到巨大的负面影响，反而因这场疫情有了更多的时间相处、休息，岁月静好，感恩！但全球人命的丧亡、经济的滑落、许多人的工作朝不保夕甚至失业了，外交关系也因此变得紧张起来，各国都把矛头指向中国，落后国家也因缺乏基础设施而使抗疫工作变得更加困难。在居家期间，新加坡的家庭暴力案件也增加了！我们只得在心中默默祈祷，愿天主的旨意奉行在人间，人类要回应天主的召唤，不要那么硬心，尤其是各国执政者及科学家需要以智慧及毅力面对这场疫情，克服这场挑战！

科技的日新月异，医药的发达，人还是渺小的！我们要谦卑地来到天主面前，寻求祢的庇护、光照，反省自己的所作所为是否是悦纳天主的教诲？我想这也是身为天主教徒所能尽的一己之力了！

疫情的爆发，许多人不禁问：天主祢在那里？我不由得地想起一个听来的故事。一个深受生活磨难的人向天主哭诉：“我不明白，为什么在我最需要祢的时候，祢会离开我，一路走来只剩下一双脚印？”天主是这么回答他的：“我的孩子，我爱你，我从来未离开过你。当你饱受磨难时，你只看到一双脚印，因为那时我正背着你。”此时，天主是否在背着我们呢？

疫情期间数算天主的恩典

郑开明

去年年底，庚子年临近时，上网浏览视频，说自古以来每逢庚子必有大灾难。视频还例举了1840年的鸦片战争、1900年的八国联军侵华、1960年的中国大饥荒加以佐证。截至今日，庚子年半年过去了，疫情依然笼罩，新冠病毒对全球造成的伤害，是二战以来最严重的。确诊人数超过500万、死亡人数达40万，许多大大小小的企业形将倒闭。以百万计的失业人数、以千亿计的经济损失，不由得不信庚子大灾之说。原因何在？不明。似乎冥冥之中已有定数。然而，从信仰的角度看，若不是天主的允许，疫情不会发生；若不是天主的允许，没有人能夺去祂子女的生命。因此面对疫情，是我们反省、悔改、革新的时候，而不是烦躁、恐慌、怨天尤人。疫情期间让我们数一数天主的恩典吧！我们的灵命将向前跨一步。我们都希望疫情赶快过去，然而我们还要学会在疫情中漫步！通过这次疫情，天主至少在三方面添加我的恩典：

首先，我与天主的关系修好了。“童年耶稣在智慧和身量上，并在天主和人前的恩爱上渐渐增长”（路2:52）。健康的灵性生命，表现在人和神以及人和人的关系上。居家快两个月了，由于时间充裕，我每天读经祈祷、线上听弥撒，与天主建立了良好的关系；另外，五月恰逢圣母月，堂区推展Zoom线上诵念玫瑰经，参与的兄弟姐妹相当踊跃，我也是受惠者之一。我们都在视频聚会中联系上了，大家一起祈祷诵念，彼此鼓励，互相问安。正是路加福音所说的，在人与神以及人与人之间的关系上成长。感

谢发起这项活动的工作人员。

第二，我与家庭的关系更密切了。疫情期间，世界各国为阻断病毒输入，几乎所有航班都停飞了！我国政府也呼吁国人非必要不要出门，人人“宅”家抗疫！突然间，人与人之间的距离拉远了，世界变得很大。但家庭成员的距离却缩紧了，空间变得很小。关系却密切了。这两个月来，妻子每天都做饭准备晚餐，女儿上网学烹饪，我们都吃得胖胖的！我也学会了烘焙蛋糕，还在制作与分享的过程中，建立了温馨和乐的家庭关系，这是更大的收益。我也不曾忘记，与家人谈信仰、谈人生，一起观视频、听灵歌，从中培养属灵的价值观。感谢赞美天主！家庭是社会的基本单位，也是教会的基本单位。家庭关系密切，社会结构必然巩固，教会也必兴盛。建立美好的家庭关系，是我们身为天主儿女们的美好见证。

第三，我在灵修上进步了。这次疫情，政府为了推行阻断措施，付出了巨大的财力，让员工居家办公。人们“宅”家听老歌、看旧戏，慵懒闲散的生活步伐，时间仿佛回去80年代，好不浪漫！我想，天主很有创意，近年来，由于温室效应，地球不断升温、海水不断上涨、空气污染极严重！正当人们苦无对策时，天主藉这次疫情促使我们提高环保意识，以便减缓地球的损伤程度。科学家说，这两个月来，由于二氧化碳排放量减少，空气清新了许多。是的，天主凡事都能，

先知依撒意亚呼求天主，天主不是叫日影倒退了吗？（列下20:11）。天主既然能叫时间停顿下来，天主要我们这一代人回味一下、尝一尝80年代的生活又有何妨呢？疫情期间，我们只是吃喝睡觉吗？还是寻求聆听天主的声音，觉察祂所要告诉我们的信息！居家的日子，我读了一本有关新时代如何阅读圣经，及另一本有关大公信仰传统之形成的神学书籍，获益良多。同时，从线上弥撒中，认识、惊叹大额我略的圣咏，曲调简单浑厚、气势磅礴，显示圣人的灵命高超。天主待我真好！社会学家预先看见，疫情之前和疫情之后的社会面貌，无论经济、政治将会改变。身为基督徒的我们呢，处在疫情之间，我们又看到了什么？在信仰的旅途中我们做了什么反省？我们跟天主的关系怎样？阻断措施虽然严格，却阻不断我和天主的关系！这是我这两个月来的收获。然而，线上的聚会，毕竟是虚拟的，弥撒是真实的敬拜活动，人与人之间的交际最好是面对面的。我们需要真实的在基督内才能在父内，而惟有实领圣体才能真实的在基督内。希望有关当局早日解禁，让我们恢复正常的宗教活动。



疫情下的反思

林品宏

2020年一开始，新冠疫情的发生就砸乱了我们的阵脚。所有的计划都跟着停摆或展延。什么时候才能回复原本的生活谁也说不准。有的人开始慌乱、焦躁、埋怨；原本唾手可得的自由瞬间失去，大家都非常不习惯，却无奈；只能乖乖呆在家，哪也不能去。为了家人朋友，咬着牙也要忍下去。

不知不觉两个月已过去。在这期间，有些人学会新的技能、有的找到和家人相处的秘方、也有仍然在浑浑噩噩过日子的。该如何生活是个人的选择，没有人能够帮助我们；如

果你选择往正面去看待，你会活得快乐自在；如果你忙着抱怨，你的人生将依旧灰暗，看不见方向。

这段时间，对我们信仰有着相当大的考验。因为无法上教堂而开始养成惰性。美好的星期天无需再早起，可以睡到自然醒。网上直播的弥撒，随时随地都可以观看，会不自觉地忘了自己是在参加弥撒，穿着随便，坐姿也不好，还和家人谈天说地。在家里的诱惑实在是太多了，天主应该是看得直摇头。

或许我们该反思，天主藉着这场疫情要告诉我们些什么。祂不会给予我们所不能承受的挑战，一切都是我们所能承受的。人类的贪婪，狡诈，自大，残忍或许是导致这场疫情大爆发的主因吧。主，求祢宽恕人类的无知，带领人们悔改，创造更美好的世界。阿们。



两位主徒的晋铎典礼



两位新司铎：马帅神父（左边）及张伟刚神父（右边）

出于对服务天主和教会的强烈渴望，主徒会士马帅（33岁）与张伟刚（34岁）在2020年9月14日（星期一）的当天，一起领受了铎品。那天的晋铎典礼在善牧主教座堂举行，由新加坡总教区的吴诚才总主教主持。

虽然没有以往祝圣典礼的圣歌及礼仪音乐，但那天的晋铎弥撒实在很庄重而令人振奋。吴总主教对新司铎们的劝诫也很感人 and 鼓舞人心。总主教提醒他们要怀有“恒常的喜乐及真诚的爱德”，善尽基督大司祭的职务。

当被问到收到晋铎通知的感觉如何，马帅神父说他感到很兴奋，因为他“没料到在这种疫情的特殊时期，竟然还能被祝圣为神父”。但相信这是天主的计划，要他为主作证。

张伟刚神父则说他收到将要晋铎的消息时，感到激动和高兴，但“唯一的遗憾是父母家人不能亲自参加”祝圣典礼。

至于他们希望将来成为什么样的神父。马帅神父分享说，他希望成为一位能够“在灵修生活中帮助众人，尤其是帮助他们能向天主祈祷”的

神父。而张伟刚神父却说，他希望成为一名为基督羊群诚恳服务的“真正牧人”。

的确，我们都非常感激及感恩，即使在全球新冠肺炎病毒流行的猛烈袭击下，天主仍然为祂在世的教会，提供忠实的司铎，以便传播福音和举行圣事。

感谢天主赏给了我们这两位新铎，也感谢他们回应了主基督的召叫。他们的见证象征着喜悦的希望，也邀请我们把信仰的生活付诸实行来为天主以及我们周围的兄弟姐妹们服务。