



Ignite

newsletter

Church of
St Francis Xavier
Petaling Jaya

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FOR INTERNAL CIRCULATION ONLY



Up Close with Fr Norris Seenivasan

In an exclusive interview with IGNITE, we speak to Rev Fr Norris Seenivasan on his views, insights and aspirations for our parish

IGNITE: What are your top concerns for our Catholic youths today?

Fr Norris: Undoubtedly, the youth is a very important area of concern in our parish. As compared to adults who have much stronger faith foundation, our youth would need more guidance. Nevertheless, there are also exceptionally capable young leaders who lead our Youth ministries.

In today's world, there are just too many distractions. With the dawn of the digital age, teens are spending a lot more time on the Internet. The Internet has opened up immense possibilities of starting and maintaining virtual relationships with people who are physically far away through email and social media. But nothing can be compared to forging 'real relationships' within our community.

Information is now at our fingertips. However, there is downside to having such free access to the Internet. Parents will need to exert control over the use of Internet to prevent their children from accessing negative and harmful elements. With online games, children may not be mixing around socially or indulging in physical sports like football or basketball.

IGNITE: What is your key advice to parents?

Fr Norris: My advice is for parents to be truly present to their children. Back in those days, people used to work from 9am to 5pm and therefore, parents could spend more quality time with their children. Today, the demands are greater on an individual, both in terms of career and social life. Most parents now work long

hours and sometimes, even on weekends. As a result, they may not spend enough quality time with their children.

When parents are present with their child in the moment and respond with warmth and appreciation, the child will grow up feeling secure and loved. It is not enough to be there only on important occasions or during a crisis. How much time we spend with our children and the type of parenting style will definitely make a huge difference in terms of how the child will turn out to be.



IGNITE: What are your thoughts on social media usage among children and teenagers?

Fr Norris: While social media platforms are exciting, using them too frequently can make one feel unhappy and isolated in the long run. As human beings, it's important for us to communicate and forge personal connections with one another. However, it can be difficult to do so when we're interacting via a mobile device. Not only has social media been proven to cause unhappiness, it can also lead to the development of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression when used too much or without caution.

The rise of mobile games has also brought negative effects such as addiction. An individual can spend an entire day playing online games. This could lead to serious mental health disorders, because they are not engaging themselves with the real world.

IGNITE: Why is it so important for parents to be more involved in raising their children today and how can the church support them?

Fr Norris: When parents practise good parenting skills, their child is likely to become a more positive and responsible individual in society. This is not the case for neglected children who may grow up with insecurities and frustrations. The church cannot replace the role and function of the parents no matter how high the expectations may be. Parents are the primary catechists of their children. Due to busy lifestyles or misaligned priorities, some parents just send their children to catechism classes but sadly, they do not attend Sunday Mass. This behaviour should be corrected. Children will notice their parents are being inconsistent in what they stand for versus what they actually do.

Of course, the church is here to support all parents. Hopefully, young people will develop a sense

of belonging to this parish and therefore, we could help create the space for them to feel at home. On the part of the church, we strive to be more welcoming of young people. We must provide spiritual formation. Give them a sense of mission. As Christians, it is never purely about ourselves but also our relationship with people and how we can be of service, especially to the poor.

IGNITE: How can we help parishioners lead a more prayerful life?

Fr Norris: The key to entering into a deeper relationship with God is through prayer. But there are many people who are struggling with prayer. My aspiration is to help our parishioners establish a deeper relationship with God so that their lives can be changed. There are many forms of prayer and it is important that we learn them.

We also have to understand that young people tend to get bored easily. For example, the kind of songs we sing at Mass today were the same as those when I was 5 years old. Are these the kind of songs that young people find interesting? What has gone wrong? Perhaps we should introduce more Praise & Worship songs and Gospel hymns. We have to meet them where they are, rather than impose on them.

IGNITE: What do you enjoy most?

Fr Norris: I enjoy reading. Right now, I am reading a lot about the liturgy. Besides reading, I enjoy listening to music and watching television. When I was about nine years old, I went to the library and borrowed detective books such as The Hardy Boys and Sherlock Holmes. As a teenager, I progressed to more religious books. If I had more time, I would also like to read autobiographies and memoirs. We can learn a lot from people who share their trials and tribulations.

IGNITE: What are the most rewarding and challenging aspects of being the Parish Priest for SFX?

Fr Norris: The most rewarding aspect for me is encountering individuals who are genuinely sincere and kind. One of the key challenges is the size of our parish and the huge number of ministries which is difficult to manage. Always remember the primary mission for being in the church is to serve and glorify God. Sometimes we can end up worshipping ourselves rather than God. We also may have a tendency to think that we are more important because of the work we do for others.

IGNITE: Some parishioners may feel inadequate in terms of knowledge on scriptures and Catholic faith to serve in the parish ministries. What is your message to them?

Fr Norris: The church cannot function without the involvement of our people. If God is calling you, then rest assured God will also give you the strength and knowledge that you are being called to do. We invite and encourage all parishioners to serve in our various parish ministries.

Fr Norris' Top Favourites

TV series

House. It's an American television medical drama. The series' main character is Dr. Gregory House, an unconventional, misanthropic medical genius.

Food

Chicken curry and rice

Hymns

Lord of Salvation and God of Silence.

Favourite Books

- *Walking with Inigo: A Commentary on the Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola* by Gerald Coleman
- *The Road Less Travelled* by M. Scott Peck
- *Christ on the Jewish Road* by Richard Wurmbrand
- *The Day Christ Died* by Jim Bishop
- *Run Baby Run* by Nicky Cruz





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For the latest information and event updates, please check www.sfx.com.my, www.facebook.com/sfxpj/ or [Instagram@sfxpj](https://www.instagram.com/sfxpj/).

SFX PJ Mobile app is also available for Apple & Android devices.

Message from Parish Priest

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Peace of Christ be with you!

Our SFX Parish is certainly trying to be a vibrant and welcoming one. We have a total of 19 BECs and 45 ministries, but only a small number of those attending Masses are actively involved in these groups.

IGNITE aims to nurture a deeper understanding of living life as a Catholic and to keep our parishioners informed on the latest news & happenings from the parish office, community, ministries and BECs. Every issue of IGNITE will also feature key events, experiences and reflections of those involved. Through this, hopefully you are inspired to know more and get involved too.

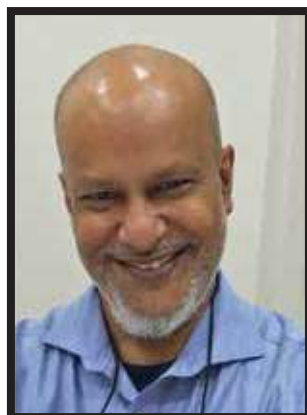
We would like IGNITE to become a vital communication platform that gives our SFX parishioners a sense of belonging to the SFX community.

Let the living faith of our parish 'ignite' the fire in you to participate, serve and grow in faith & love.

Have a wonderful & blessed 2020!

Fr Norris Seenivasan SJ

Parish Priest for Church of St Francis Xavier, Petaling Jaya



Finally, A New Home for RPX Boys

By Kathleen Sammy

With its pristine white walls and elegant design, the double-storey bungalow in Section 3 is a new home built and owned by the Society of St Vincent de Paul's (SSVP) Conference of St Francis Xavier.

On 28 September 2019, invited guests began arriving in the morning for the launch of the newly-completed Rumah Pengajian Xavier (RPX). The RPX boys greeted each guest with a smile, their youthful enthusiasm and energy apparent with every gesture. The day's programme began with emcee, James Praba thanking honourable guests: member of parliament YB Maria Chin, Rev. Fr Norris Seenivasan SJ, Rev. Bro Simon Raj SJ, Max Yong, Chairman of Parish Pastoral Committee and all guests.

Melvin Victor, Chairman of RPX shared that the new home is the culmination of a dream that took six years to materialize. In 2002, the Conference of St Francis Xavier set up RPX with the purpose of using education to empower the less- privileged to break the poverty- cycle and to nurture the boys to become able leaders of tomorrow. The home provides foster care, sending them to school, providing food and board as well as seeing to their educational needs. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to all involved in the behind-the scene efforts of SSVP: the administrative staff, teachers, donors, benefactors, and all past and present parish priests of SFX.

"Presently there are eleven boys in RPX with plans to increase that number to twenty-four. We hope to reach out to more people. The boys are a gift to us so that our vocation to serve can be realized," said Melvin.

According to Irene Sibert, President of SSVP (Conference of St Francis Xavier), 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the Conference of SFX. Part of their charity work includes home visitation to under-privileged families, known as Friends-in-Need (FIN). "It is very encouraging to see our RPX boys coming back to serve in the society. We also have our FIN children contributing to the Society as well".



Fr. Norris Seenivasan addressing the guests



Care for Creation project presentation



Parish priest of SFX giving the prayer of blessing for the home



The loudest applause of the day went to Patti, the RPX housemother. When Melvin stepped up to thank her, the sound of the cheering crowd literally shook the house! She was a figure of quiet humility and seemed rather uneasy about attention. Said Melvin: "Patti is the heart of the home, cooking and taking care of the boys. She has dedicated her life to them." The prayer and ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at the main entrance. Our parish priest Fr Norris said the prayer of blessing for the home before going around the premises to bless the rooms.



Skit on a parable of 'The Good Samaritan' by the RPX boys

Fr Norris then signed the commemorative plaque, after which guests were shown a short video presentation featuring the boys' lives at RPX.

'Care for Creation' Project

Represented by Thomas, Jun Yuan and Shran, the boys showcased RPX's commitment to 'Go Green' in their new home via organic farming, utilizing a hydroponic system. So far, the boys have planted okra, beans, spinach and tomatoes in their small vegetable patch.

Their final presentation of the day was a light-hearted skit. The parable of 'The Good Samaritan' took on a different spin to include a young man who was only interested in taking a selfie with the poor beaten-up Samaritan, and a doctor, romancing his nurse! The actors were absolutely brilliant.

It was hard to believe that some of these talented boys used to struggle with spoken English. The skit was indeed a real crowd-pleaser and drew much applause from the audience.

All in all, a happy conclusion to a memorable day!

Uncle Francis thought me that I need more than a good education. You need a good character and attitude to succeed in life - Ganesh, former RPX boy



Guest of Honour Parliamentarian YB Maria Chin officiated Rumah RPX opening & spoke about the need for longer term national solution on poverty.

SFX HOLY WEEK CHOIR

- . SFX Holy Week Choirs are looking for singers & musicians!
- No singing experience needed.
- . Please WhatsApp:
 - Adeline 012 3391093
 - Shereen 017 2980282

A Journey of Faith, Hope and Love

By Natalie Narayanan

Often times our lives are occupied with fulfilling worldly wants – work, family, friends, material goods, travels, holidays etc. The more we climb up the corporate ladder, the more material goods we indulge ourselves in —because we feel we deserve it. It makes us feel content when we have plenty, when we have our friends, and we always have a good time. I thought that my occasional cash donations to charities, was sufficient to earn those extra brownie points.

I never really knew how to bring this passage to life: Matthew 25: 35-36 – “ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.”

When I became a sponsor for a friend attending RCIA, it was then that I discovered the Catholic Church had so many ministries which each one of us could get involved in. It was an opportunity to deepen my faith, to build a relationship with God, and to give back to the church in some way, for all the blessings and graces I have received.

And that was how my journey with the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP) started. I joined them in their house visits to the urban poor communities. I was roped in to help with the society’s Rumah Pengajian Xavier fundraising dinner. In spite of my limited technical design ability, I helped design marketing materials such as buntings, flyers, and brochures to help publicize the society’s efforts to raise more funds for the much needed rations for the Friends-in-Need, financial aid for education and school transportation, basic necessities and food, medical and emergency aid for the underprivileged and other critical areas.

With my background in public relations and communications, I helped in drafting letters, developing presentations, writing articles

***“Go to the poor:
you will find God.”***
— St. Vincent de Paul



and other written content, to assist in the society's outreach to create awareness, seek contributors and to share the work we do with others.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul, formed in 1833, is present on all 5 continents, in 153 locations. The actions of the Society are always based on love of neighbour. The members have a vocation to a personal relationship with Christ, whom they meet in the people they are helping. The gift of time and being available, are the most precious gifts anyone can contribute, to see the face of Christ in the poor.

God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called (Corinthians).

Though less than 3 years with the society, my journey has indeed been an eventful one, as I found myself being nominated for positions and taking on more responsibilities, through God's grace. I discovered that Spirituality, Commitment and Passion are really my driving force to continue to contribute in whatever ways possible, despite challenges, time and work commitments.

I realised that no matter where you are in your life with God, HE is qualifying you for HIS service because you are CALLED. He can help you overcome your fears, doubts and uncertainties, and even use them to help others. Just allow Him to use you.

One of SSVP's founders, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, has shared that "Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give your time, your talents, yourselves. The poor person is a unique person of God's fashioning with an inalienable right to respect. You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; You must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of a long term improvement."

There is definitely much more to learn, do and discover. I can only pray for God's graces and strength to continue guiding each one of us to answer His Call to Love and Serve.

To find out more about how you can get involved or contribute to SSVP SFX PJ, please contact Francis Lai at 016-6829330 or Irene Siebert at 012-2775126

That the Edifice Does Not Crumble

By Justin Victor

Once a month, there is a special collection at Masses for the 'Building Maintenance' fund. Have you ever wondered what exactly this is for? We come to Mass and we leave soon after. But there's a lot that goes into keeping the church and its grounds clean and facilities functioning well.

Anto Joseph, who chairs the parish Building Management and Maintenance Committee, shared the many aspects of keeping the church itself in good condition.

Key tasks accomplished during 2019:

- There were leaks in the annex roof earlier in the year and again in the middle of the year that were fixed. The rubber lining of the stained glass windows had started to give way and these were replaced about 3 months ago.
- The audio system in Loyola Hall and the other rooms in the annex had to be rewired. Along with this was the overall work on the electrical system done in 2 stages to address power outage happening from time to time.
- Re-paving the roads around the church building and the parking areas, including re-painting the parking bays was carried out, again in two stages.

- Re-painting of the columbarium – started in late 2018 and continued into 2019.

- The flush system in the toilets was upgraded.

Other recurring expense to the parish include:

- Cleaning of the grounds (including the drains) and toilets.
- Scheduled, regular maintenance for 100 air-conditioning units operating in the whole parish complex.
- Maintenance of the lift
- Utilities – electricity, water, telecommunications etc.
- Security

The Sunday collections are insufficient to meet with the recurring cost of all of these maintenance items. Financial assistance is obtained from individual donors as well as the central fund of the parish.



Reaching Out to Migrants and Refugees

By Kelvin Lau

The Migrant Ministry of SFX was initiated in February 2016 as an outreach to migrants and refugees within the parish boundaries who may come to SFX requesting assistance. Responding to the call of the Year of Mercy for us to become the hands of Christ, the ministry is reaching out to the oppressed and downtrodden.

We seek to provide support and assistance to migrants and refugees as well as, to deepen the parish community's awareness of their situation and nurture a sense of shared humanity and dignity with all who come to our doors. In this, we are guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the words of Pope Francis:

Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all, for being more.

- Pope Francis

A Second Chance

Morgan (not his real name), a 52-year-old UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) refugee from Sri Lanka, fell into bad times and depression. He started to drink his problems away. Morgan and his family fled to Malaysia in 2004 due to the war that broke out in Sri Lanka. They have been waiting for repatriation to either Canada or United States since 2007.

As the only breadwinner in his family, it fell to Morgan to support his family of five. Sadly, work was intermittent as jobs were not easy to come by. This affected Morgan's ability to pay the utility bills, his children's education fees and medical expenses. In despair, he appealed to SFX Migrant Ministry for help. A member of St Rita BEC (Sec 21) agreed to help sponsor his six months arrears in utility bills amounting to RM1,200.

As Morgan had basic sewing skills, the Migrant Ministry, together with the Society of St Vincent de Paul decided to help source for a second-hand electric sewing machine to help supplement his part-time income.

Half of the expenses was sponsored by SFX Parishioner, Dorothy D'Silva & Migrant Ministry. There are several other cases like Morgan's who have sought our assistance. God willing, Morgan is praying for repatriation after a long 12 year waiting period.

Another effort of Migrant Ministry has been to support the Myanmar community in the vicinity. On 8 February 2019 Fr Norris celebrated home mass with the Myanmar refugees who live at Peter Claver House in PJ. Nearly 60 faithfuls including children who attended were excited to have our Parish Priest celebrate Mass. All were so attentive to Fr Norris's homily translated by James, a Myanmar volunteer and catechist.

This home was set up about 3 years ago through the initiative of SFX. It serves as a common place for Myanmar Catholics to meet weekly for praise and worship in their mother tongue, Zoe Chin dialect. The war in the mountain regions of northern Myanmar had displaced them about 15 years ago.



For more details on Migrant Ministry, kindly contact Kelvin Lau at kelvinlau1128@gmail.com

A Pilgrimage to the L'll Church on the Hillock

Dedicated to the Saint of the Little Way

By Regina Morris

Can we lead saintly lives without being Superman or Wonder Woman? The answer is a definite YES. On November 9, 2019, a beautiful Saturday morning with soft sunshine and gentle breeze, 25 pilgrims from BEC Section 10 and friends, learned about St Theresa "The Little Flower of Jesus" at the Church of St Theresa, Nilai, in a very personal way.

The church was designated by the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur as the pilgrimage church for the Extraordinary Mission Year 2019 due to St Theresa's influence on the church through her writings, as a doctor of the Church and also due to her contemplative prayer life.

St Theresa is also the patron saint of missions alongside her co-patron, the great St Francis Xavier. Unlike St Francis Xavier though, she never left her cloister but from a very young age had a great zeal and desire to pray for the conversion of sinners. In her own words, God made her "a fisher of souls".

Doing Small Things with Great Love

We were blown away from the moment we entered the church grounds by the warm welcome and smiles of the parishioners. Breakfast was ready for us. It was simple and filling, but most important of all, it was prepared and served with more smiles and love. That was just the beginning of our experience of being touched by those truly following in the footsteps of the Saint of the Little Way.

In that one morning, we admired the simplicity of the parishioners, their actions of either carrying a chair for the elders to sit on as we paused at the stages set up around the church to listen to Father's explanation of St Theresa's life, or pushing the speaker-amplifier around for Father, until we celebrated Mass together. We experienced the doctrine of St Theresa of the Child Jesus exemplified by the parish priest himself, Rev Fr Eugene Benedict.

His simplicity and passion in doing everything with great zeal and love touched everyone in the group. One young man in our group Barry Joy Nusip, from Sabah shared, "I was touched by the love of God when I experienced Fr Eugene's humble ways. He himself was an example of St Theresa in his attention to small things with great humility and with heartfelt smiles, words like "I will pray for you"; words which touched my heart."



The Impact from This Pilgrimage

In another pilgrim's words: "St Theresa was a simple child who was brave and had courage. Fr. Eugene often highlighted this to us. I believe that this trait should be the foundation of our faith, and that we must let it spread and overflow to others in our own parishes, just like the petals of roses that were showered on us. If all of us just contributed a little time to the Lord whether at BEC or parish level and be in admiration with childlike simplicity, our interaction with others would take on a different path and strengthen our faith," shared Noeline Chanan.



These supposedly sophisticated urbanite parishioners learned a thing or two about practicing true Christian charity from our out-of-town brothers and sisters who did small things with great love.



In front of the church. A final memory to cherish. It was a moving and potentially life-changing pilgrimage

Celebrating the Feast of Saint Francis Xavier

In support of the Triduum to St Francis Xavier, the patron saint of our parish, the Social Communications Ministry and the Form 4 Religious Education (RE) students collaborated to create a mini-exhibition featuring the life journey of this great Jesuit saint. St Francis Xavier is known as a Great Missionary - for he brought the Message of JESUS CHRIST to us.

The exhibition was officially opened to parishioners on 1 December 2019 at the church foyer from 9.30 am. The eight posters illustrated the significant milestones of Saint Francis Xavier's life journey and his important mission to the East. Form 4 RE students put together four of their own posters using creative arts & crafts materials which made an interesting read for both children and young adults. Parishioners were invited to participate in a short quiz which drew them to the important facts of Saint Francis Xavier.

A video clip on the story of St Francis Xavier was also featured. As part of the Feast Day celebration, the Social Communications team served homemade chocolate cakes as well as distributed St Francis Xavier prayer cards & button badges.



The Triduum was preached by Rev Fr Clarence Devadass which culminated in a Mass on the actual feast day (3 December).

Looking Back: Family Day 2019

It was a beautiful Sunday morning on 7 July 2019 when families and friends of SFX gathered at the church basement to celebrate our annual Family Day. Rev Fr Norris Seenivasan, Parish Priest of St Francis Xavier Church gave a warm welcome address, followed by a short prayer. Fr Norris then declared Family Day 2019 'open' by sounding the traditional gong three times, much to everyone's delight!

SFX Family Day 2019 Committee Chairman, Paschal Heng, highlighted that this year's Family Day event has taken on a new format. Specifically, additional seating and a much bigger dining space was allocated to facilitate closer interaction and fellowship among parishioners. Musical performances, sing-alongs and line-dancing were also organized to keep everyone entertained throughout the morning. To add to the carnival-like atmosphere, the committee also set up game stalls at the church field to keep the young and young-at-heart entertained with fun-fair games.



Fr Norris officiating the SFX Family Day



Church Liturgical Calendar – The Seasons and the Reasons

By Kathleen Sammy

The Catholic Liturgical Calendar consists of the cycle of liturgical seasons. The seasons determine the observation of feast days and holy days along with which Scripture and Gospel readings, and liturgical colours are to be used i.e. **purple** - penance, preparation (Advent and Lent); **red** - sacrifice (Passion Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost and the feast of the apostles and the martyrs); **rose/pink** - anticipation (third Sunday in Advent and the fourth Sunday of Lent); green - hope, life (Ordinary Time) and **white/gold** - joy, purity (Easter, Christmas, feasts of the Blessed Mother, angels and saints who were not martyred).

In each cycle of the Liturgical Calendar, you will find six seasons - Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, Easter and Ordinary Time. The start of a new liturgical year marks the transition from one lectionary cycle (A, B, or C) to the next.

Our church liturgical year begins with the first Sunday in Advent. This is the Sunday that falls on or closest to November 30. Advent marks the season when we prepare for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. We have four weeks of preparation before the celebration of Jesus' birth. Even in the midst of preparing for his first coming, we look towards the time when he will return to judge the living and the dead. The season spans four Sundays with the third being Gaudete Sunday, the midpoint. From December 17 to 24 (the octave before Christmas), the Gospel passages cover the genealogy of Jesus; the Annunciations to

Zechariah, to Mary and Joseph; the Visitation; and the birth of John the Baptist - thereby leading us into a deeper and more intense sense of Christ's birth.

The season of Christmas begins with the Masses of Christmas Eve. On the Sunday after Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family followed by the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on January 1. The Sunday that follows marks Epiphany, the visit of the Magi. The Christmas season closes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Sunday after Epiphany).

ministry of our Lord.

Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent which cuts into Ordinary Time. Lent lasts for 40 days (not including Sundays) and prepares us for Easter. It is a time of fasting, penance and almsgiving. It is also a time of spiritual renewal for Catholics as our catechumens prepare to receive the sacraments of initiation. Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord is the sixth Sunday of Lent and it begins Holy Week. Churches remove all decorations on Good Friday, and veil anything that cannot be removed in purple. Holy water is also removed from the fonts in preparation for the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil.

Especially important is the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday). Those who truly immerse themselves in living the entire paschal cycle (Lent, Triduum and Easter's Fifty Days) will find that it is life-changing. It is our hope that in suffering with Christ, we will rise with him at his resurrection.

After the Easter season, we have the 40 days leading to the Ascension, followed by Pentecost. Thereafter, we move back into Ordinary Time (which lasts about six months after Easter) and conclude with the Solemnity of Christ the King, the final Sunday of the liturgical year.

As the liturgical cycles unfold, it is a wonderful reminder of the mystery of Christ, and our own calling to participate in the mystery of salvation.



At this point, we move into Ordinary Time. Because Ordinary Time only begins on the Monday after the Baptism of the Lord, a glance at the Ordo (published by the Archdiocese) reveals that the church names the Sunday that follows - the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (rather than the First Sunday, which might seem a bit confusing). During Ordinary Time, Gospel passages point to the public

Ignatian Spirituality: Towards Intimacy With Christ

By Kathleen Sammy

In Christian spirituality, holiness is sought in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Catholic Tradition, there are numerous spiritual paths that are taught and practiced by the various religious communities such as the Franciscans, Carmelites, and Benedictines. At SFX Church, our Jesuit Fathers and Brothers follow Ignatian Spirituality, the result of the personal encounters that St Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Society of Jesus i.e. the Jesuits) had with God.

St Ignatius was a Spanish soldier and aristocrat who discerned his calling to serve God after being wounded on the battlefield. It was while convalescing from the resetting of his shattered leg (done without anesthesia) that he requested for novels of romance and adventure to read. But the only books available were on the life of the saints and 'The Life of Christ'. It was during this time of recovery that he noticed something interesting. His daydreams of courtly adventures would, at first, fill him with excitement but afterwards an emptiness came upon him. But when he dreamt about serving God as St Francis of Assisi and the other saints he was reading about did, he felt likewise excited. And afterwards, feelings of consolation and joy remained with him.

During his recuperation at Loyola, he had a vision of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus. So transformative was this vision that it instilled in him a great disgust for his past life. Indeed, he became devoted to Mother Mary and often implored her help throughout his lifetime to become more like her son, Jesus Christ. Recovering from his wounds, St Ignatius went to Manresa where he notes that God treated him like a 'schoolboy' in order to deepen his desire for selfless service of the Divine Majesty. At Manresa, he experienced mystical visions of the Trinity, Christ's humanity and Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Later, on the banks of the nearby river Cardoner, he had further mystical experiences wherein 'the eyes of his understanding began to open'.

The fact is that St Ignatius was a profound mystic, a fact often overshadowed by his apostolic successes. He continued to reflect on the different 'spirits' or interior movements experienced in his life and these are in his retreat manual called 'The Spiritual

Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola'. Often described as St Ignatius' greatest gift to the world, it contains a series of reflections and meditations on Christ's living, dying and rising and is used by a retreat director to help those making a spiritual retreat.

The Daily Examen is one of the popular Ignatian exercises that guides us in prayerfully recollecting the events of our day in order to encourage a constant awareness of God's presence in our lives.

The Examen is a tool that guides us in 'finding God in all things' and is what Ignatius calls 'discreta caritas' – discerning love; for God loved us first and it is our fundamental and inherent desire to want to return that love. We are restless until we rest in Him.

At its heart, Ignatian Spirituality is an invitation to intimacy with Christ. It is a spirituality that is grounded in the conviction that God is active in our world and opens our heart to be a part of God's labour in our world. It is a movement away from being self-absorbed to being closer to God and drawn towards serving others with gratitude and humility.

SFX parishioners are strongly encouraged to sign up for the program 'Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality and Prayer' that will run from 11 January to 16 May 2020. For more details, please refer to the SFX website.

the
EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has 5 steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15-20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1 Ask God for light.
I want to look at my day with God's eye, not merely my own.
- 2 Give thanks.
The day I have just lived is a gift from god. Be grateful for it.
- 3 Review the day.
I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit
- 4 Face your shortcomings.
I face up to what is wrong – in my life and in me.
- 5 Look toward the day to come.
I ask where I need God in the day to come.

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Life Camp 2019

Reconnecting Our Youth

By Rosabel Pinto



The youth of Lifeline took off to the beach for a vacation with a difference... to recharge and reconnect more deeply with Jesus Christ over a relaxing weekend.

The Lifeline Youth Ministry of the Church of St. Francis Xavier (SFX) organized a 3 days 2 nights retreat for its members from the 4 to 6 October 2019. Open to all youth aged 18-35 years old, the retreat was held in the 104-year-old premises of the Infant Jesus Youth Centre in Port Dickson. The retreat, "Vacay with JC", was a great opportunity for participants. This time round, the retreat was different from previous LifeCamps as it featured a smaller group of 12 participants. This allowed everyone to bond with one another on a more intimate level.

The first day of the retreat kicked off with an interesting ice-breaking session, which allowed the participants to warm up and get to know each other a little better. After the session, the participants were divided into groups of four to share their expectations for the retreat. Some participants hoped to enhance their prayer life and renew their faith during the retreat. Some of them also looked forward to having a great time with their fellow Lifeline members.

The retreat sessions were conducted by Kenneth Jeremiah Foo, SFX's Pastoral Youth Worker. During the sessions, he reminded the participants how Jesus was also a youth when He started His Ministry on earth. Overall, the sessions aimed at getting the participants reacquainted with Jesus Christ. The sessions also taught the retreat participants a valuable lesson on leadership and what it means to serve in the church.

During the final session of the retreat, Kenneth surprised everyone by re-enacting a scene from the Bible - the washing of the disciples' feet. Following Jesus' example, he proceeded to wash and kiss the feet of all the retreat participants. After washing their feet, he invited the participants to do the same for their

peers. When asked about the whole experience, Vanessa Eu, one of the retreat participants commented that it was a rather humbling experience for her. "It was the first time having my feet washed by a peer. It made me want to do the same for others," she replied.

The youth were also given time to relax at the beach and enjoy the sunset. The weather was perfect and windy. Everyone enjoyed themselves tremendously. Rachel Chin, one of the participants, summed it up perfectly when she said that the retreat was "a great way to connect with young adults of the same faith and life cycles against a beautiful background".

On the final day of the retreat, Fr. Kenneth Gopal, OCD – a Carmelite priest from Seremban, was invited to celebrate mass with the participants. Then, after a hearty lunch and packing up, they headed home feeling refreshed and enriched by the retreat.



The Lifeline Youth Ministry welcomes all young adults aged 18-35. The group organizes "Prayer Nights" (Intercessory prayer, rosary, Lectio Divina, Bible study, etc.) every Monday at 8.30pm. For further enquiries on the ministry and its activities, please contact Kenneth at 012-673 0736.

Life Teen Revived !

Life Teen Core Team Formation Retreat 2019

By Nigel Lopez



What is our purpose in life? To what end does this great and monumental dance through the months and years do we eventually succumb to?

It was the question pondered in many a creative, witty, profound and deeply personal manner during Formation Retreat for the Life Teen Core Team this year. Life Teen is being relaunched in our parish, and the brand-new core team, who were accompanied by veterans of the past Life Teen leadership, had a retreat to reflect on our Mission.

We are called to administer to perhaps the most important, yet most vulnerable population in our world today – the youth. We have journeyed for months with formation sessions nearly every Friday, and now we needed to get to know the call better. We reflected on - Why focus on teenagers? Why Life Teen? Why us? Why me?

Teenagers are at an extremely exciting and volatile point in their lives. Possibilities suddenly sprout from a hundred different directions, from a new found sense of self and self-determination that marks the departure from childhood, more frequent and

closer interactions with friends, as they begin to look at the more difficult, important questions of life and what they want out of it.

It is also the time when the physical becomes a very colourful and powerful fount of experience, and the time where they make decisions in choosing from the myriad of positive and negative influences which will have great and grave effect long after they've left the adolescent years.

A further question we sought to answer was 'Why Life Teen' specifically?' In the carefully prepared sessions of the retreat, we learnt what we must be called to The Giver of Life Himself.

As we explored our motivations for why we were doing what we were doing, and in thinking about what we must do in the months and years ahead, we were made to realise we should be asking a greater question: what does God want of me? What does the source of all Life and Love want with my life?

Father Alex Chelvam, a newly ordained priest who worked many years in our SFX parish and who

was the formator of the retreat, put the question very squarely into our minds many times: what is your Mission? In each and every word of his talks, the message of the many videos he used, the activities and discussions we had to do, the question took on a new form: what mission was Jesus Christ giving to me?

The Life Teen Core Teams' formation sessions before, and the culmination in the retreat, is all about: Love one another, just as I have loved you (John 13:34). First, we needed to be bonded with the Giver of Life, making Him the centre in our lives, and that comes with lots of prayer. Second, we need to pour out His love upon those He loves; in our case the youth of the parish.

In the end, our call is to faithfully and honestly say the words of St Paul: It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

We invite all of you at SFX parish, parents, youth, children, to join us in this journey. Come to our launch event on the 15 February 2020, where there will be tons of food and festivities. For any inquiries please contact Kenneth Jeremiah Foo at 012.673.073.

Our Home in Peril

By Lisette Estandarte

The proliferation of fire in forests across the globe. Stronger typhoons and hurricanes. Rising water levels. Extreme temperatures. Melting of ice regions. Marine animals being found to have consumed garbage in polluted bodies of water. All of these are happening in our environment in different corners of the world. The earth, our home, is in peril!

The Holy Father, Pope Francis responds to this peril with his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*: Care for our Common Home. In this secular letter, the Pope discusses what he discerns is pertinent for Catholics but also for the whole world. It is a call to everyone, regardless of nationality, religion, age, continent, country, or region.

We all only have one planet to call our home – our common home.

Laudato Si - 'Praise Be to You' - released in mid-June 2015, came at a critical time as the world convened to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at a UN summit. It is not just on climate change, but on integral ecology - about how all the problems of the planet are interconnected – a human-inflicted environmental problem not just concerns the environment but humans as well.

So Pope Francis asks, "What could be the reason that human beings have this sort of violence against nature?" There are technologies to help us improve the state of the world, but because of greed and personal interests, technology is being used to dominate the environment and disrupt the natural order of things.

Not only nature suffers but because of the interconnection of all the things in the environment, people are also affected. There is hunger due to lack of vegetation and natural food supply, there are loss of jobs or opportunities because of wrong business decisions, there are loss of homes due to damages by natural calamities, and several other instances where maltreatment of nature makes humans suffer.

What the world has agreed to do

Pope Francis' encyclical advocates for the people who are most affected with extreme changes in our environment, which are the poor and the future generations. It also influenced the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the UN Climate Change conference – 193 countries came to an agreement on several SDG's. Here are some of them:



To close loop on industrial cycles

Modern industries should close the loop by using their products' wastes as part of production material. Each one of us should also contribute by minimizing the amount of waste that we produce, and be mindful of the things that we use.

To end human-induced climate change

Laudato Si presents arguments backed by science, including the Albedo effect, which refers to the reflective power of a surface. One of the things that could help alleviate these negative effects is for us to reduce the usage of air-conditioning as it emits greenhouse gases which affects plant growth and reproduction.

Protect the oceans and marine ecology

There is much work to be done in encouraging people to reject single-use items, and for manufacturers to switch from single-use packaging to recyclable ones; the wastes end up in the seas and destroy flora and fauna.

Protect the land ecosystems, the terrestrial ecosystems, and the rainforests

The forests used to provide 20% of the earth's total oxygen supply and deforestation has aggravated extreme heat. The haze that comes yearly to Malaysia is human-induced from the slash and burn of land.

The world needs help – NOW!

Pope Francis invites us to change our lifestyle from one that only thinks of ourselves, to one that is mindful that how we treat the earth affects others. Remember, "you cannot really believe in God and love God, while disregarding what God has made." If we really believe that God created us and created the earth and if we really love God, we will love the earth. Because we are all interconnected, one body, one pulse. We are not above nature. We are OF nature. What we do for our planet, we do for ourselves.

Let's Care for Our Parish

By Ken Phuah

On 8 June 2015, our Holy Father Pope Francis released his environmental encyclical. "LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord." These are the words that open Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology and care for God's creation. Pope Francis addresses Laudato Si' to "every person on the planet," for we all share a common home—the earth. Quoting St. Francis of Assisi's beautiful canticle, His Holiness reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

The ecological crisis is a summons for all Catholics to profound interior conversion—to renew our relationships with God, one another, and the created world. God created the world and entrusted it to us as a gift. We now have the responsibility to care for and protect it and all people, who are part of creation. We are one human family and have a shared responsibility for others and for creation.

His Holiness calls for all of us to make important changes as individuals, families, and communities to preserve our home.

So how can we as SFX parishioners play a more active role in caring for our environment?

The key to initiating a Laudato Si movement is work together and educate one another on environmental issues.

Start to highlight the consequences of our everyday lifestyle practices that perpetuate decline or harm to our environment. Every small step counts from this point.

Here are simple ways to make a difference!



Energy Conservation & Efficiency

- ✦ Consider Car-pooling. Why drive two separate cars to attend weekend mass when you could car-pool with someone near your home?
- ✦ Use Public Transport. If you stay near a public transport network that could connect you to church, consider using it. It's a good form of exercise too!
- ✦ Don't idle the car with engine running while waiting to pick-up someone. Always turn off the engine if you are expecting a longer wait



Electricity & Water Conservation

- ✦ Don't turn the tap fully to wash hand, instead adjust water flow volume as needed for each use. Most importantly, don't leave tap running while looking at the mirror
- ✦ Point out any leaky tap or toilet immediately to facility manager to fix
- ✦ Switch off lights & air-conditioner when you are last person to leave a room
- ✦ Keep doors in air-conditioned space closed to ensure minimum cold air escape



Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

- ✦ Remember the 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse & Recycle in all parish events – Refrain from using disposable utensils and packaging that add to rubbish pile such as plastic cutleries & packaging materials. Instead use recyclable containers or metal / porcelain utensils which can be reused repeatedly
- ✦ Reduce use of bottled water: Eliminate one-time use plastic. Bring a water bottle instead to refill water when finished



Reduce meat consumption

- ✦ Avoid wasting food by purchasing what is sufficient to avoid wastage. Food waste comprises more than 20% of garbage in landfills and significant source of methane gas (a greenhouse gas)
- ✦ Skipping meat once a week is good for us and great for nation's health. In addition to Meatless Friday, why not stretch it to Mondays! It takes approximately 1,850 gallons water to produce a single pound of beef.

A Call to Connect With People of Other Faiths

By Harry Chew



The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in different religions; the Church calls us to connect with adherents of other faiths. These words of Pope Paul VI (The Nostra Aetate - Declaration On The Relation of The Church To Non-Christian Religions, 1965) is the inspiration of the Parish Ministry of Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Affairs (PMEIA).

SFX PMEIA started on 18 April 2017 under then parish priest Fr Lawrence Andrew. We are strongly guided by the objectives of the Archdiocesan Ministry of Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Affairs (AMEIA) which are as follows:

- To promote mutual understanding, respect & collaborations between Catholics, other Christians (ecumenism) and the followers of other religious traditions (inter-faith);
- To encourage the study of religions; and
- To promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue and ecumenism.

We are also being exhorted, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, that we recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these people.

During the 4th Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Convention (PMPC IV, 2016) attended by laity, religious, priests and bishops from all 3 dioceses in Peninsular Malaysia to pray, discuss and discern the direction of the local Church, dialogue with Christians & non-Christians was discerned to be one the main focus areas of the local Church.



We view dialogue as acknowledging that those we are engaging with have something worthwhile to say, while we make effort to entertain the other party's point of view and perspective. Dialogue requires us to have the right mentality and also the attitude of respect, cordiality and being non-judgmental with the other person.

Some of the milestones achieved by SFX PMEIA:

- Established connections with, and visited, the neighbouring places of worship such as the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, Sri Sithi Vinayagar Hindu Temple (Jalan Selangor), Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Jamek (MJSAAAS - Jalan Templer) & Gurdwara Sahib

Petaling Jaya Sikh Temple (Jalan Utara).

- Played host to the Lutheran-Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation, co-organised by the Lutheran Church in Malaysia & Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur (Sept 2017)

- Collaborated with Petaling district parishes to organise the 2019 Christian Unity Week (CUW) ecumenical prayer service (Jan 2019, Assumption Church, PJ).

- Organised talks/sessions by Dr Edmund Chia and Fr Sebastian Painadath who spoke on why we get involved in interfaith dialogue; Hamidah & Patricia who facilitated an interactive half-day session which were open to parishioners and non-parishioners including non-Christians, to get participants to understand and address the issues of stereotypes, prejudice and biasness.

- Organised 2 mini formation sessions to provide basic understanding on different religions of the world.

- Collaborated with the Religious Education (RE) group to conduct the Sunday school lesson for Form 3 & Form 4 students on Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Dialogue (EIRD).

- Attended external events/religious celebrations of people of other faiths to officially represent SFX. Working closely with AMEIA level to collaborate with PMEIA of other parishes.



PMEIA visited Sikh Gurdwara Sahib community in Petaling Jaya

Four Basic Points for True Dialogue

Observe/Listen - focus on the facts before jumping to conclusions; make an effort to identify the source and verify the facts

Interpret - further analyse the matter at hand, establishing causal links; arrive at our own preliminary conclusion

Reflect - think deeply or carefully about what we are facing, reflect and be introspective about one own's value system and thought process

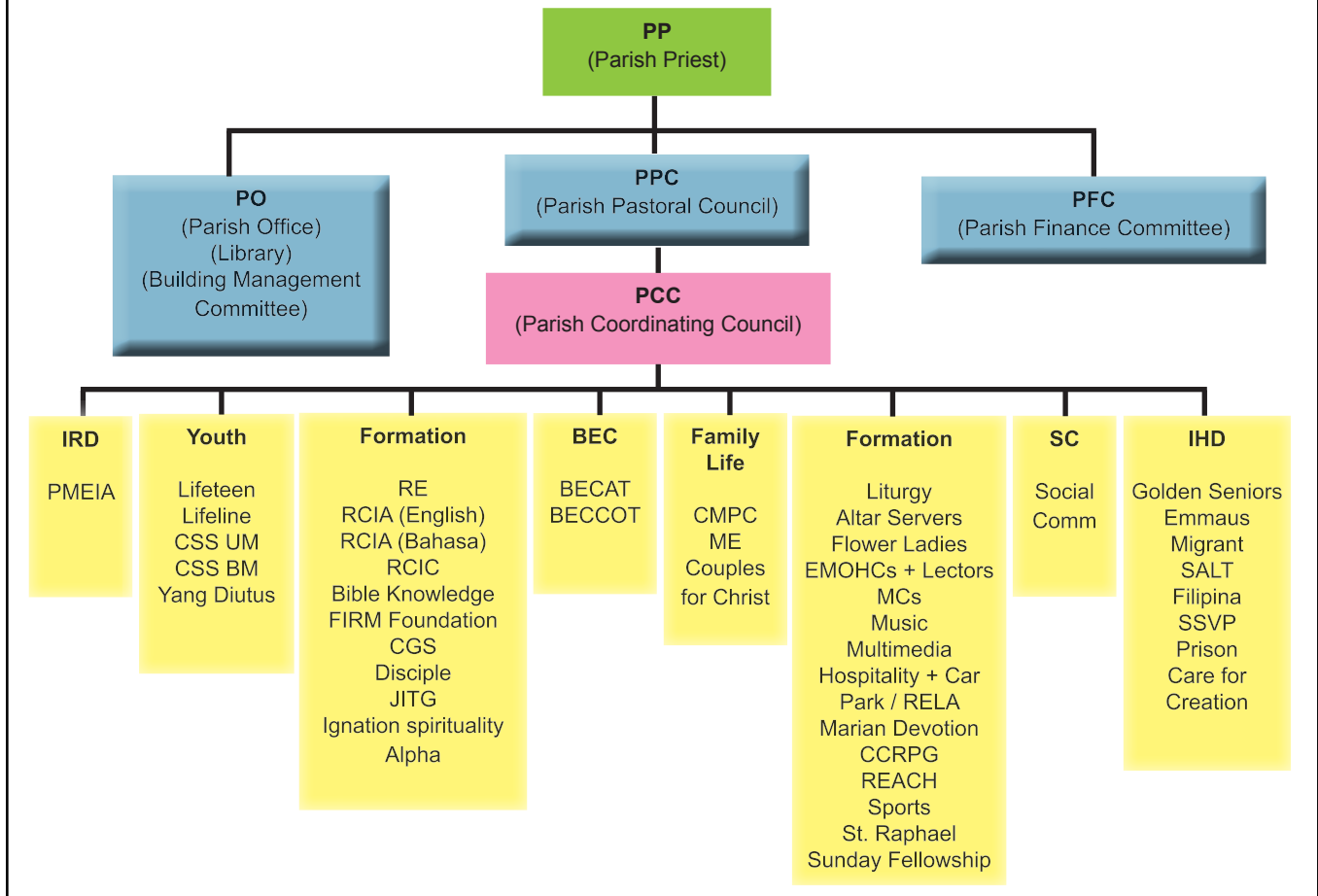
Decision - where we decide to respond or do nothing

“I joined PMEIA because I saw it as a platform for me to expand my view of the world around me. To gain awareness and understanding about the rites and rituals of other religions especially when living in a multi-racial society like Malaysia. Although interfaith dialogue is officially one of the key areas of interest of the Church—in reality, it is often ranked at the bottom of the priority list of most parishes. Interfaith dialogue does not attract widespread interest largely due to the prevailing attitude of indifference, religious ‘superiority’ or perceived threat of conversion especially among the young. Learning about the faith of others allows me to reflect on the beauty of my own faith, and to ask myself how to be a better Christian. I also learned to work creatively and to collaborate as much as I can with other groups to get things done. We wish to invite more of you, God-willing, to be part of our ministry”

-Harry Chew

For more details on PMEIA, please contact Eddy Lee at 012-337 7196

Parish Structure Church of St. Francis Xavier, Petaling Jaya



My Friend In Prison

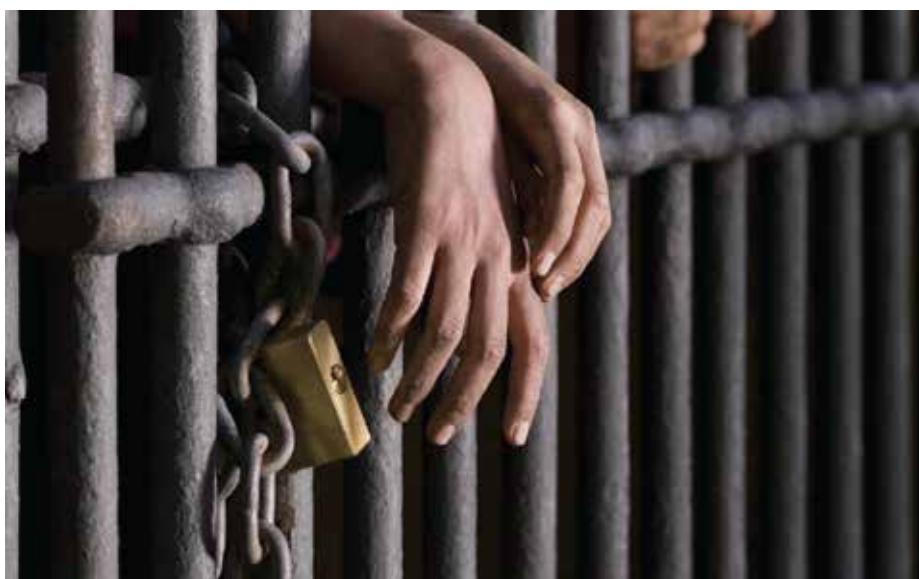
My friend in prison is on a life sentence. The irony hits me. The Lord tells us that for those who would follow him, life is death and death is life. "If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it." (Luke 17:33)

So yeah, I am on a life sentence too. My friend is bound in a physical prison, and we are both in a prison of the world. But we have been invited to spiritual life by grace.

For years, I struggled to understand the commands to carry our crosses and spread the good news. Finally, maybe, I understood. The cross is not suffering per se, but a love sacrifice that involves suffering. It can heal me and others in ways I do not fully grasp provided I bear it faithfully and surrender whatever comes with it to Christ.

This is what I would like to share with my friend, that there is a beautiful ending. But, how could I, on this free side of the sealed glass window, unable to touch her, speaking only by telephone, tell her about redemption in suffering, about the good that can come out of it? How could I say this to someone who has been inside a cage for a long time, I who have never been in one? No, I cannot preach. I will open my heart and listen, and leave it to Our Lord to use me.

How her face lights up when she sees us, me and my partner in ministry, and so I think she must be the loveliest person I ever met, her smile so beautiful that it surprises and frightens me, touches and warms me. She is so young. She says that since our last visit, she has been praying for God to bless us with happiness and to send us again. I thank her for her prayers and blessing.



We chat. How are you feeling? Done anything special lately? She and her friends made a cake. "You get to use the oven?" "Oh no! We crushed the biscuits and mixed them with milk in our room," she laughs. She has been excited since we last met because she has called her family for the first time in years after receiving phone credit from us.

After we chat for a while, silence comes and engulfs us both. There is motion in silence, but we haven't learnt to be comfortable with it yet. "Anything more you'd like to tell me?" I ask. "What about you, anything to say?" she replies. "No." I can't think now of all the words that will come to me later after I have left her.

So I pick up a pencil and we go through a list of items that we are allowed to buy for her from the prison shop. Sabun, lotion, ubat gigi, sikat, lotion nyamok, Maggi Mee, biskut and kopi are among things available, stuff that I take for granted and often waste. "Why do you look sad?" I ask. "Because you are going," she says. "You can share these things we will get for you with anyone who needs them," I say. "I do. They are not mine, but from God," she replies.

"Come again," she says. "God sends us. We'll come." She smiles, our eyes meet and whisper goodbye, and we get up and turn around at the same time in opposite directions.

Back in the car, my partner asks, "I feel joy. What about you?" I reach inside me for a word – I am glad. Blessings have flowed both ways across the wall and glass that separate us from our friend in prison.

Those interested to know about the activities of the SFX Prison Ministry may contact Asella at 019-2031228 or Mee Yok at 016-6163692.



SFX Prison Ministry's Light A Candle Campaign: One thousand candles lit and numerous prayers delivered