



Church of the Holy Family

6 Chapel Road, S(429509) Tel: 6344-0046

Message for the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sunday, Year A, 2020

Dear Parishioners of the Church of the Holy Family

We are poised to re-open our Church for Mass as from next weekend (11<sup>th</sup> / 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020) onwards. Masses were suspended for 5 months as part of our country's principal strategy of 'Containment' to combat the Pandemic. Measures such as Circuit Breaker, Safe-Distancing, Reduce D-I-D (Duration – Intensity – Density) etc are concrete manifestations of this 'Containment' approach.

The COVID-19 virus is still raging fiercely in many parts of the world. By this weekend, total confirmed cases would cross the 11 millionth mark worldwide and number of deaths have already crossed the half-millionth mark worldwide.

The basic thrust of Containment is to slow down the daily infection rate since this virus is super-infectious but downside collateral is that most of what we are accustomed to in our daily routines are taken out of our hands suddenly. This causes quite massive rupture, disruption and dislocation of our usual routine daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and all our plans for the rest of the year. We may feel that we have been zoomed off to another planet to stay without warning and any adequate preparation. All these are compounded by job losses and subsequent severe economic hardship.

Compared to the 'Herd Immunity' approach which was used by some European countries and that turned out to be catastrophic in terms of lives lost and occupying pole positions for the total number of infections, whereas the 'Containment' approach helps to minimise the loss of lives as well as the total accumulated infections so that as many as possible can escape infection. Such fortunate people which include most if not all of us also escape suffering secondary post recovery medical issues, arising from COVID-19, which can be chronic. In addition, the healthcare infrastructure is not overwhelmed and this allows for capacity to render attention to other major illnesses.

Perhaps, another approach to be considered is to embark on Mass Testing for everyone twice a month. In Wuhan, the first epicentre of the Pandemic, after the lockdown was lifted, there was a flare-up within 2 weeks. The authorities decided to test everyone and they have tested 9.9 million people in 2 weeks with the help of 65 laboratories. Just about 300 were found were to have been infected asymptotically. Life has returned to normal there.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of this Sunday we gain a rare glimpse of the Prophet Zechariah who wrote for his people who have just returned from Exile in Babylon. They too felt totally disoriented after having been relocated out of their comfort setting in Babylon to Jerusalem which was in ruins after being destroyed by the Babylonians earlier. They felt that they have landed on another planet.

Prophet Zechariah sought to stimulate the faith of the Jews. He was concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people and urged all to rebuild the Temple as the centre of worship. His oracles are about principles and outlook that will ensure right action be taken holding out a hope for a coming age which is not immediately imminent. Here in this passage, the prophet speaks of a King entering Jerusalem 'on a colt, the foal of a donkey' signifying an inauguration of the reign of peace. This was fulfilled in Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and we celebrate it every year on Palm Sunday. Let us continue to persevere to pray for peace in our mind and heart so that we can remain calm and composed make the most of this difficult period as we move in tandem with the progressive easing of restrictions.

In the Gospel text, our Lord recommends that we take up no other yoke except His yoke which specially tailored for each one of us according to our conditions, circumstances and situations. A yoke is not just any kind of burden but a burden intended to produce work. We contemplate a yoke offered by Our Saviour as the necessary means towards spiritual liberation and enhanced spiritual interests (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading) and ultimately deepened our friendship and relationship with Jesus leading us to echo the Responsorial Psalm, " I will bless your name forever, O God my King".

Since our Church will re-open for Mass next weekend, thus this weekly Reflection Column shall be suspended indefinitely after this issue. Nevertheless, let us remember each other in our prayers as we proceed with the authorities to come out of this Pandemic.

5<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Anthony Zaccaria while 6<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Dominica. 7<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Ethel and 8<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Priscilla and St Aquila. 9<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Godfrey and St Jane Scopelli and St Augustine Zhao Rong while 10<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Peter Tu. 11<sup>th</sup> July is the feast day of St Benedict and St Olga.

Fr Stanislaus PANG