

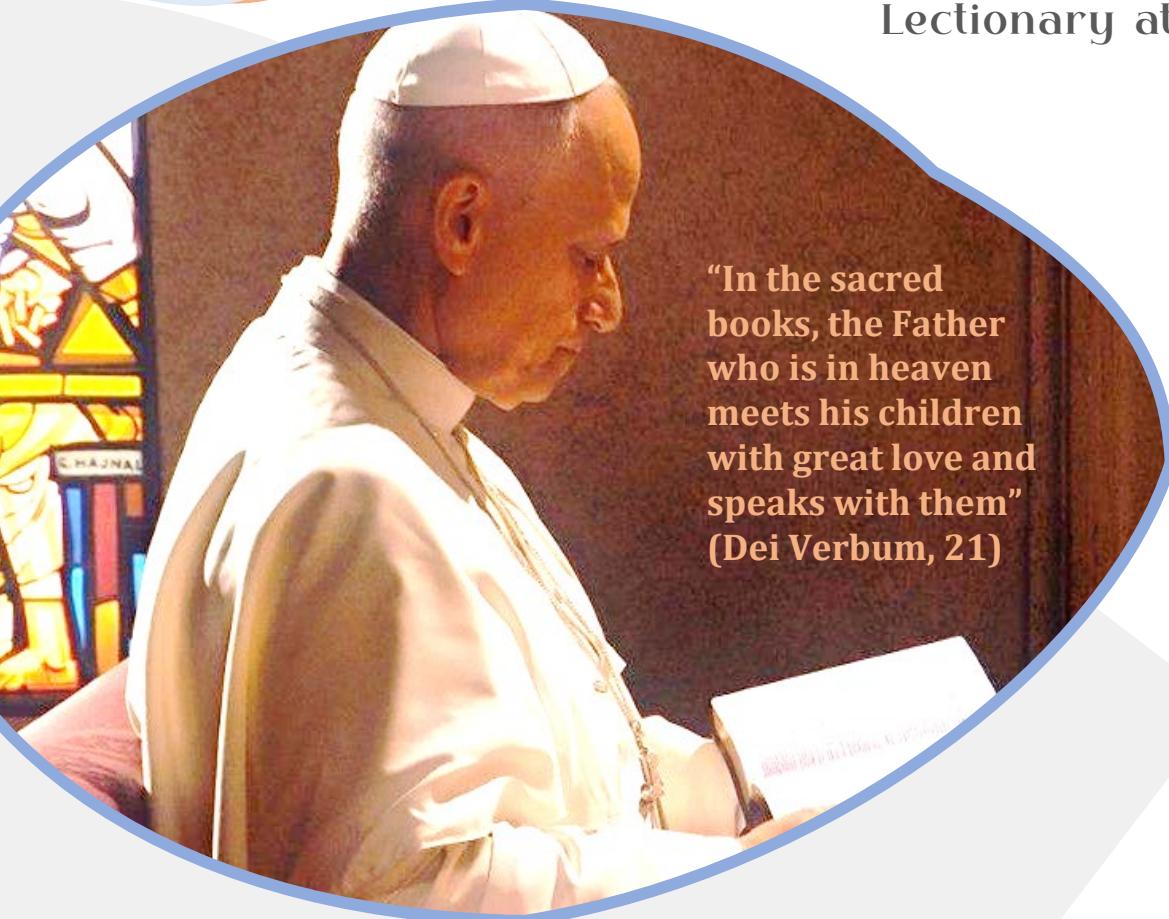
Song for Vincent

Lead us back to God's ways...

2026 is here, and so is our first issue of the year! We start with a new look, and a new outlook on life. After all, the new year is all about change. We start with a refreshing message from our Parish Priest, Fr. Paul. Make 2026 a year of scripture. Our article on how you can make scripture reading fruitful will certainly help, and an intriguing quiz on Matthew's Gospel, which is this year's feature for the Sunday Lectionary at Mass, will test your knowledge.

HAPPY READING!

“
The Bible
isn't a book.
It's a library.”



“In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them” (Dei Verbum, 21)

Of the four gospels, Matthew's holds a place of privilege...

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JAN 2026 | ISSUE #79

 svdp.sg/newsletter

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Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. - Isaiah 43: 18-19

New Year Message 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, wishing all of you a blessed New Year, filled with Love, Peace and Joy.

First of all, let us praise and thank God for his great love and his abundant blessings throughout of last year. Together with my fellow priests, we would like to thank all of you for your generous contributions and active participation in all the celebrations and activities held during the Jubilee Year 2025.



We also like to thank all of you for completing our Parish Survey. Your voice and feedback matters. We had reviewed the Survey findings and have integrated your feedback and pastoral needs in our 2026 Pastoral Plan. Together with the Parish Pastoral Council, we had discerned and chosen the 2026 pastoral theme - 'One Parish family centred on Christ'.

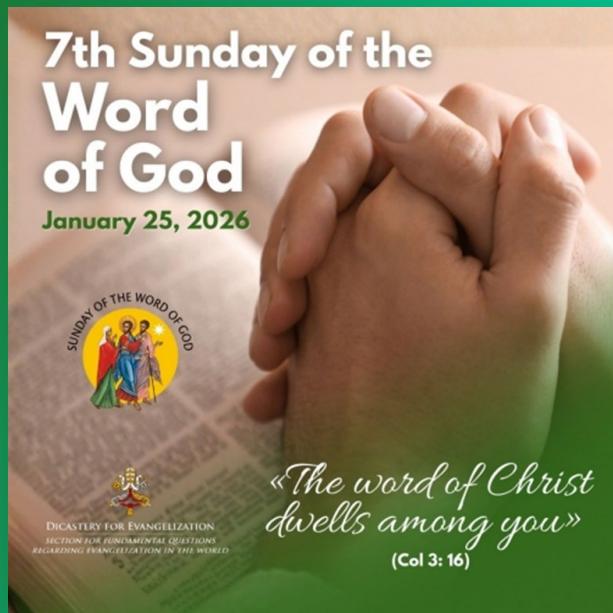
Aligned with our Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan, our Parish will focus on the priority to 'build communities of faith, at the parish and across, for and including different groups.' We invite and encourage all of you, parishioners and ministry members, to participate and join in the liturgical, pastoral and communal activities planned for 2026 to be One Parish family centred on Christ and in communion with each other to build strong faith communities and support each other in our journey towards holiness.

May our Heavenly Father guide and strengthen each one of us, so that we may grow in holiness and continue doing good works, following the example of our patron saint, St Vincent de Paul.

God's abundant blessings to you and your loved ones always.

Yours in Christ,
Fr Paul Lim

THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELLS AMONG YOU



On 25 Jan 2025 which is the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Church celebrates “Sunday of the Word of God”. Pope Francis instituted this annual observance to remind us of the centrality of the Word of God to the life, faith and mission of the church, The theme chosen for this year’s celebration is taken from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians: “The word of Christ dwells among you” (3:16).

St Paul does not ask that the Word be merely read or listened to; he wants it to dwell, that is, to live in us, to shape our thoughts, guide our desires, and make credible the witness of the disciples. When space is given to the Word, each person discovers that the Word of God dwells in the heart like a seed that, in due time, sprouts and bears fruit. Indeed, all of us are invited to nourish ourselves with the daily bread of the Word and, afterwards, to proclaim it to our brothers and sisters, for proclamation flows from the abundance of the heart: “from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34).

Listed here are 10 points for fruitful Scripture reading so that the Word of God is “alive and active” (Heb 4:12) in us:

PRAYER IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END.



Reading the Bible is unlike reading any other books. It should begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to the Word of God. You’re not just reading words—you’re meeting the Word made flesh. It should also end with a prayer that this Word will bear fruit in our lives, helping us to become holier and more faithful

THE BIBLE ISN'T A BOOK. IT'S A LIBRARY.



The Bible is a collection of 73 books written over the course of many centuries. The books include royal history, prophecy, poetry, challenging letters to struggling new faith communities, and believers' accounts of the preaching and passion of Jesus. Knowing the genre of the book you are reading will help you understand the literary tools the author is using and the meaning the author is trying to convey. It is also important to first have an appreciation of the major themes that run through the whole Bible as well as the key events and important messages.

KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE IS – AND ISN'T.



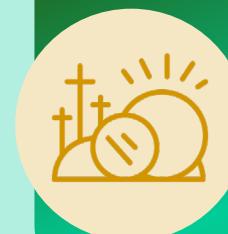
The Bible is the story of God's relationship with the people he has called to himself. It is not intended to be read as history text, a science book, or a political manifesto. In the Bible, God teaches us the truths that we need for the sake of our salvation.

THE SUM IS GREATER THAN THE PARTS.



Read the Bible in context. What happens before and after, also in other books, significantly helps us to understand the true meaning of the text that is written.

THE OLD RELATES TO THE NEW.



The Old Testament and the New Testament shed light on each other. While we read the Old Testament in light of the death and resurrection of Jesus, it has its own value as well. Together, these testaments help us to understand God's plan for human beings.

USE THE THREE R'S: READ, REFLECT, RESPOND.



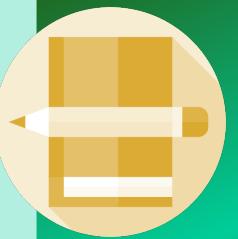
- Read: What does the passage say?
- Reflect: What does it mean? What is God saying to me?
- Respond: How is God calling me to live differently?

PRAY WITH IT.



Learn to use Lectio Divina, an ancient and powerful method of prayerful reading. Meaning "divine reading" in Latin, Lectio Divina is a traditional way of praying the Scriptures so that the Word of God may penetrate our hearts and that we may grow in an intimate relationship with the Lord.

WRITE IT DOWN.



Journaling your thoughts, questions and verses that stood out can help you process and remember.

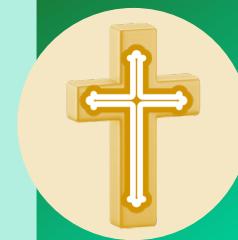
Journaling also helps you explore the Bible and reflect deeper. It helps form your prayers as well.

YOU DO NOT READ ALONE.



By reading and reflecting on Sacred Scripture, Catholics join those faithful men and women who have taken God's Word to heart and put it into practice in their lives. We read the Bible within the tradition of the Church to benefit from the holiness and wisdom of all the faithful.

THE BIBLE IS A LIVING CONVERSATION WITH GOD.



We read Scripture not just for knowledge, but to grow in love — love for Jesus, love for the Church, and love for the world He sends us into. Vatican II explains it this way: "In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them" (Dei Verbum, 21). And when we take a step closer towards God by opening the Scripture, we come to realise that He is already there, waiting for us with open arms.

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR JAN 2026:

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

The Bible isn't a book. It's a library.



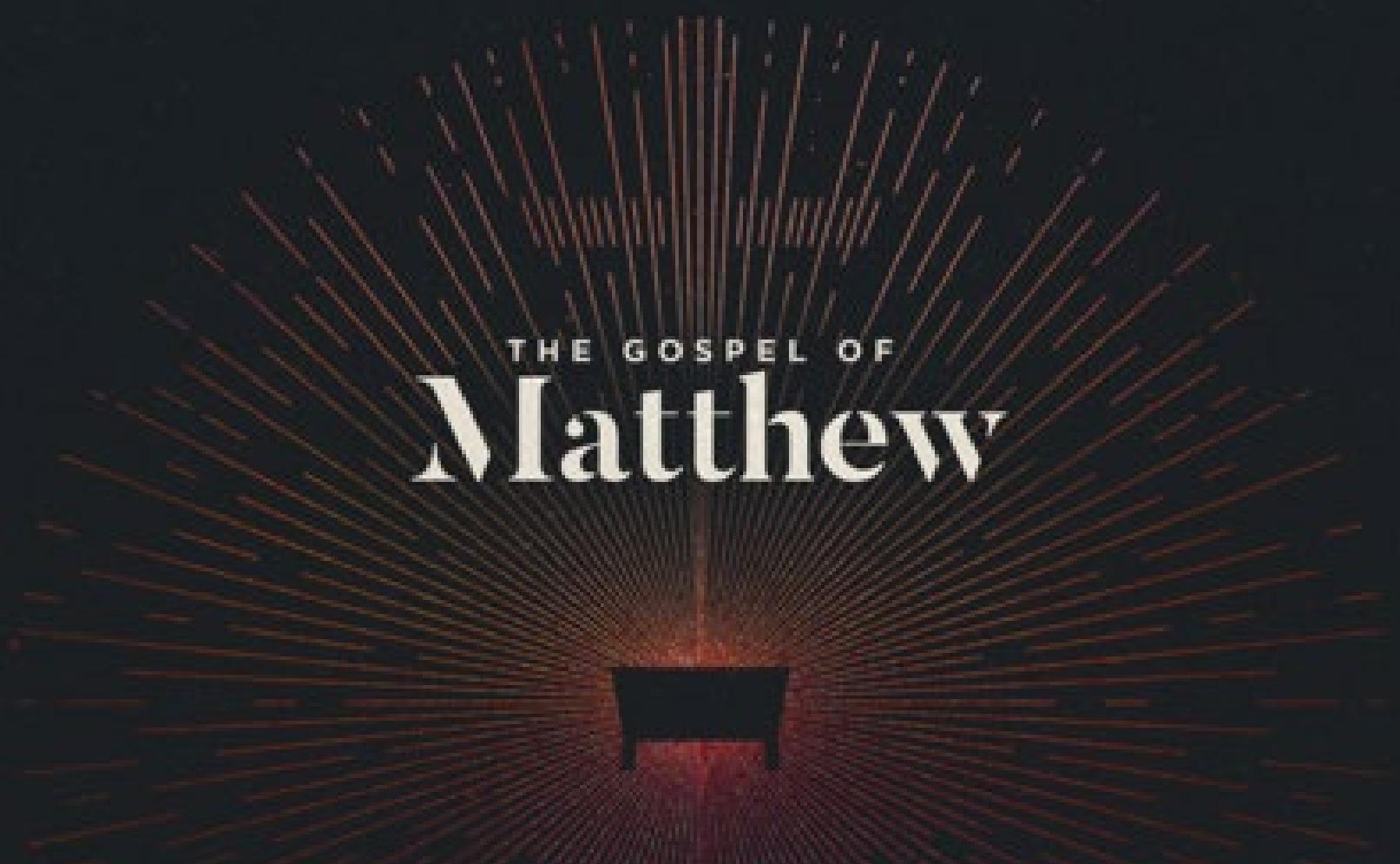
For some people, putting their thoughts into words feels intimidating. Remember, you don't have to write something on every line. The goal is not to fill up all of the empty space.

Instead, let God fill up the space in your mind and your heart. Whatever inspires you, pick up a pen or pencil and write it down. It doesn't have to be perfect — it will not be published.

Sometimes, picking up and reading what we've written so long ago, serves as a reminder of how much we've grown, and what obstacles have diminished from our lives.

WHAT TO WRITE...

- ➡ Copy or paraphrase Scripture
- ➡ Write your prayers
- ➡ Go deeper with observation, interpretation, and application



THE GOSPEL OF
Matthew

God With Us

By Francis Sim

We are back to Year A of the three-year cycle for the Sunday Lectionary at Mass and we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew. Of the four gospels, Matthew's holds a place of privilege, as it presents Jesus' teachings in the most systematic fashion. It is thus particularly attractive as a handbook for instruction.

What are the distinctive features of Matthew Gospel? Try out this quiz to find out:

1. Matthew's target audience for his Gospel is primarily the Jewish Christians community.

- (a) True
- (b) False

2. Instead of "Kingdom of God", what phrase did Matthew use to convey the same spiritual reality?

3. Matthew structured Jesus' teachings into 5 discourses each with a distinct core theme. Name any 2 of these discourses.

4. Traditionally, the four Gospel writers have been represented with symbols. Which of the following is for Matthew?

- (a) a rising eagle
- (b) an ox
- (c) a lion
- (d) a man

5. Which of the following statements is true?

- (a) Only Matthew's Gospel has the genealogy of Jesus
- (b) Only Matthew's Gospel has the accounts of Jesus's birth and early childhood
- (c) Only Matthew's Gospel has the Hebrew word "Emmanuel"
- (d) Only Matthew's Gospel has the account of Jesus' baptism



6. Which of the following is unique to Matthew's Gospel?
(You can choose more than one.)

- (a) the visit of the Magi to the newborn Jesus
- (b) "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- (c) Peter's attempt to walk on water
- (d) Judas' suicide
- (e) the wise and foolish virgins
- (f) the parable of the sheep and goats

7. St. Joseph did not actively speak in the Bible, and the Gospel writers did not write down any dialogue St Joseph had with the Holy Family. However, Matthew did record a single word that St Joseph spoke. What is that word?

(Hint: it is to fulfil a command given by the angel of the Lord in his dream)

8. The last sentence of Matthew's Gospel is...

- (a) "And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."
- (b) "And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place."
- (c) "They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God."
- (d) "The one who guarantees these revelations repeats his promise: I shall indeed be with you soon. Amen; come, Lord Jesus."

ANSWERS

1. **(a) True:** Several features of his Gospel suggest that it was written for a Jewish audience. For example, unlike Mark, Matthew does not explain Jewish customs like hand-washing or Sabbath laws that his audience would already know; he portrays Jesus as a new Moses and Jesus' teachings as a new Torah; he cites the Old Testament often, usually to demonstrate that Jesus fulfils Jewish prophecy. By one count, Matthew includes 61 quotations from the Old Testament (compared to 31 in Mark and 26 in Luke). Underlying these quotations is the conviction that God is actively accomplishing his divine purposes foretold in the Jewish Messianic prophecies.

2. **Kingdom of Heaven:** Matthew uses "Kingdom of Heaven" instead of "Kingdom of God" primarily out of reverence for the divine name, a Jewish practice to avoid taking God's name in vain, especially for his Jewish audience. It appears more than 30 times in his Gospel and stands at the very centre of Jesus' preaching: God is now establishing his kingship over the world through the Messiah. The kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is one that comes from heaven and establishes the will of the Father on earth as it is in heaven.

3. **The Five Discourses are:** (1) Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7): Contains the Beatitudes, Lord's Prayer, Golden Rule, and teachings on righteousness, prayer, and love for enemies, forming the core of Christian ethics; (2) Mission Discourse (Mt 10): Instructions for the twelve disciples as they are sent out to preach and heal, focusing on their mission and challenges; (3) Parables Discourse (Mt 13): A collection of parables (like the Sower, Mustard Seed, Weeds) explaining the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven; (4) Community Discourse (Mt 18): Guidance on the life, discipline, forgiveness, and humility within the Church; (5) "End Times" Discourse (Mt 24-25): Jesus' prophecies about the destruction of the Temple, His second coming, and the final judgment.

The public ministry of Jesus including these 5 discourses will be read over the 34 Sundays in Ordinary Time and recognising its structure and themes will enable us to see the context of the readings from one week to the next.

4. **(d) a man:** Traditionally, the four Gospel writers have been represented with symbols based on how they began their Gospels.

Matthew begins with the Genealogy of Jesus, so his symbol is a man. Luke begins his gospel with the Temple at Jerusalem and stresses the theme of sacrifice, so the figure of the ox is associated with him. Mark begins his with John the Baptist whose "voice crying out in the wilderness" is as solitary and powerful as a lion's roar. And John's Gospel, according to St. Jerome, achieves spiritual heights and therefore soars like an eagle.

5. **(c) Only Matthew's Gospel has the Hebrew word "Emmanuel":** The Hebrew word "Emmanuel" appears 4 times in the Bible—three times in Isaiah and only once in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Matthew.

"Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us.'" (Mt 1:22-23) From beginning to end, the theme of Emmanuel – the theme of God with us – radiates through Matthew's Gospel in the kingdom Jesus is building.

6. **(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f):** It is estimated that at least 20% of Matthew's cannot be found in the other 3 Gospels. It includes the infancy narratives, miracles, parables, Jesus' teachings and incidents during the passion.

7. **That word is "Jesus.":** "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" (Mt 1:20-21) As head of the household, St. Joseph would have been the one to officially pronounce the name of, "Jesus."

Matthew records how, "When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus" (Mt 1:24-25).

It is fitting that the just man, Joseph, would be recorded as only saying, "Jesus." St. Joseph is a model of humility, entirely devoted to his son. His example should inspire us to have a similar relationship to Jesus, making sure Jesus' name is always on our lips.

8. **(a) "And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.":** The parting words of Jesus bring our minds back to the Chapter 1 of Matthew, where Jesus received the glorious title "Emmanuel", meaning God with us (Mt 1:23). Now, 27 chapters later, at the close of the Gospel, Emmanuel himself promises to "be with" the apostles in their mission of bringing the kingdom to all the nations. And like the apostles, the same Jesus continues to be with us today as we are called to go forward and bring the kingdom of Christ to a broken, wounded world that is longing for the healing, freedom and love that only Christ can give.

Marked with Ashes



READ

Ash Wednesday is not a day of obligation, but it usually attracts a substantial Mass attendance. Participating in the Eucharist and receiving ashes on the foreheads is a powerful way to begin the holy season of Lent, in which the Church calls the faithful to conversion and to truly prepare to live the mysteries of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are many rituals in the Catholic Church which may seem strange or even bizarre to the uninitiated and the imposition of ashes will surely be one of them. So, what is its significance?

Firstly, the ashes used are typically created at the parish church through the burning of palm branches. These palm branches were blessed on Palm Sunday the year before, which connects the beginning of Lent to the end of Lent, when we remember the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The penitential season begins with the crucifixion and ends with the crucifixion.

Secondly, one of the prayers used by the priest to impose ashes on our foreheads is meant to remind us of our mortality and the consequences of Adam and Eve's original sin. The prayer, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return," is a direct quotation from the book of Genesis when God is delivering his judgment to Adam and Eve after they eat from the Tree of Good and Evil.

By the sweat of your brow
you shall eat bread,
Until you return to the ground,
from which you were taken;
For you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.
- Genesis 3:19



We are all going to die, and death may come at any time. Keeping this fundamental truth in mind helps us live each day more meaningfully. "Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart" (Psalm 90:12).

Furthermore, ashes were used by many throughout the Old Testament as a sign of their repentance, asking God to have mercy on them. In the book of Judith, "all the Israelite men, women, and children who lived in Jerusalem fell prostrate in front of the temple and sprinkled ashes on their heads, spreading out their sackcloth before the Lord" (Judith 4:11). Afterwards, "The Lord heard their cry and saw their distress" (Judith 4:13).

Most famously when the prophet Jonah preached in the city of Nineveh, "the king rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (Jonah 3:6).

Each time when the people sprinkled themselves with ashes, repent of their sins and cried out to God for mercy, the Lord heard their cries and spared them from destruction.

This act is filled with spiritual allusions and is an important sign of conversion and inner renewal. Considered in itself, it is a simple liturgical rite, but very profound because of its penitential meaning: with it the Church reminds man, believer and sinner, of his weakness in the face of evil and especially of his total dependence on God's infinite majesty".

Ashes are a rich symbol in the Catholic Church, one that connects us to a long biblical tradition of crying out to God for mercy. The ashes remind us of our mortality and need for repentance, but ultimately, it is about hope - hope in a loving and merciful God who brings beauty from ashes, light from darkness and life from death.

More on Ash Wednesday -

Who can come forward to receive the ashes?

Anyone, regardless of age, and whether one is baptised or not.

What must I say when I come forward to receive the ashes? What must I do when I stand before the priest?

One receives the ashes in silence and returns to the pew after receiving them.

How long should one keep the ashes on one's forehead?

Until they fall off naturally. Besides, it's a good testimony of our faith and it reveals that we are Catholics.

Why is there no vigil Mass for Ash Wednesday?

Anticipatory vigil Masses are usually celebrated for Sundays and other Solemnities. Ash Wednesday is not a Solemnity. We don't anticipate Ash Wednesday with a vigil Mass on Tuesday evening.

Do I have to fast on that day?

Code of Canon Law 1251 says that abstinence & fast are to be observed on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday.

However, because the celebration of the second day of Lunar New Year falls on Ash Wednesday, 18 February 2026, there is dispensation from fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday 2026. See here the Pastoral Statement for this dispensation. ([Pastoral Statement for Dispensation from Fasting and Abstinence on Ash Wednesday 2026 - Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore](#))

This symbolism of repentance is why the words spoken at the imposition of ashes may also be Jesus' injunction to "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

St. John Paul II summarized the depth of meaning behind the ashes:

"'Create in me a clean heart, O God, ... take not your holy Spirit

from me.' We hear this plea echoing in our hearts, while in a few moments we will approach the Lord's altar to receive ashes on our forehead in accordance with a very ancient tradition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

<https://svdp.sg/pdf/bulletin.pdf>

Jan – Feb '26



Altar Servers Recruitment Drive

The Altar Servers Ministry is inviting boys aged 9 years and above who feel called to serve the Lord at the Liturgy to join their ministry. Parents, we appeal to your generosity to encourage your sons to join us in serving the Lord in this ministry. Please approach the Parish Office for more information or to register.

SVDP Mass for the Sick with Anointing

The Pastoral Care Ministry of St Vincent de Paul is organising a Mass for the Sick with Anointing with Fellowship after.

Sat, 7 Feb 2026 from 10 am to 12 Noon
REGISTER [HERE](#) or at the Parish Office.



CaFE - Beloved Disciples

Pope Francis reminded us all that 'older people are a treasure'. This profound and enjoyable course will help many to feel new value and serve with fresh confidence.

An inspiring course for the over sixties in four 30-minute sessions:

- The Autumn of Life
- Changing your World
- Thy will be done
- The best is yet to come!

11 Feb, 25 Feb, 4 Mar, 11 Mar (7:45 to 9:15 pm) held on Zoom

REGISTER [HERE](#) or via mobile: Peter: 9638 6857, Felicia: 9139 6641 or Julia: 9191 7527

For more information, please visit:

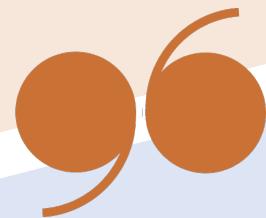
<https://www.charisuk.com/cafe-ondemand>
<https://www.charisuk.com/cafe-ondemand/general-resources/beloved-disciples>

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

Congratulations on wedding nuptials:

Gerald Lim & Stephanie Luo
Nicholas Chan & Chen Li Ying
Lionel Lim & Nicole Wee

Deepest condolences to the family of:
Mary Chong Ah Moi



FRIENDS OF VINCENT (FOV) LAUNCH NIGHT

Calling all Post-Confirmation Youth and Young Adults! You are warmly invited to the launch night of Friends of Vincent (FOV), our new pastoral umbrella uniting all Youth and Young Adults of the parish under a shared mission.

Join us for Vespers, dinner, and fellowship on Saturday, 7 Feb, 7pm at Fr. Saussard's Cafe. REGISTER [HERE](#)
Please RSVP by 1 February for catering purposes. See you there!

Kids' Zone

2026



If Jesus were alive today, he would about 2,031 years old...

Let's start the year with a focus on Jesus. That's right, our Beloved Saviour... Jesus said "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is the way to God, not just when we ask for his help, but also as a model of how we should be...

The Superhero

"You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus means saviour, and the Bible shares many of his qualities. Can you identify some of his 'superpower' traits?

- SIGHT TO THE ___ ND
- CURING THE S ___
- W ___ KI ___ G ON WATER
- RE ___ URR ___ TION
- TURING WATER INTO ___ E
- MULTIPLYING F ___ D

Word Search

Jesus had many good traits. Can you find them below?

1. Loving, 2. Kind, 3. Humble, 4. Strong,
5. Prayerful, 6. Faithful, 7. Bold, 8. Wise

A	S	T	R	O	N	G	T	C	J
Q	W	G	L	I	V	Z	H	W	L
Y	X	B	O	L	D	Y	U	J	U
Z	D	P	V	W	B	Q	M	Z	F
O	J	W	I	J	I	C	B	D	H
O	Y	D	N	I	K	S	L	X	T
C	T	Z	G	V	P	G	E	Q	I
P	R	A	Y	E	R	F	U	L	A
W	V	Q	I	D	Y	X	T	J	F

Write a Prayer

Dear Jesus, today I want to thank you for _____. It gives me joy knowing _____. And, I would like to pray for _____. AMEN

Colouring

What colours will you give to the children's clothes?

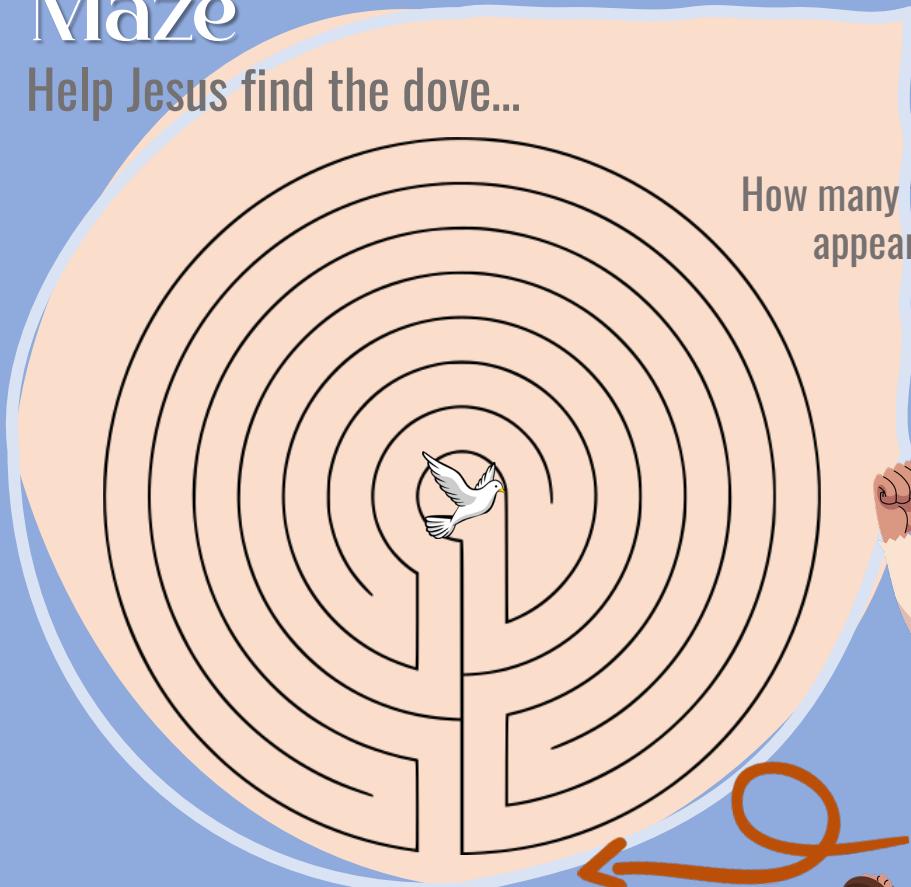
Did you know that during Biblical times, all clothes were made by hand by the women of the family.

Luke's gospel (2:7) says that baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes.



Maze

Help Jesus find the dove...



How many times does this icon appear in this newsletter?

The Bible isn't a book. It's a library.

