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PETITIONS & THANKSGIVING LETTERS

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Novena Notes

The Mission of God's People

In one of the great tragedies of their history, the Israelites spent forty-nine years in exile in Babylon. Before that, the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, destroying the city and the Temple. Nothing was left and the people were taken away from the land that God had given to them. That led to a huge loss of their identity and led many to question their faith in God. "How could God allow this to happen?" they asked. But the exile would come to an end and in the year 538, they returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and their society.

The third section of the book of Isaiah relates the experiences of the Israelites as they returned to Jerusalem. Even though the Temple was rebuilt, many other aspects of society did not fall in place. Very quickly, the old class divisions and conflicts between different groups began to reappear. The dream of establishing an ideal society now appeared naïve and the people became more disillusioned. So they resorted to fasting. They hoped that God would have pity on them, show them mercy and restore Jerusalem to its former glory. Here is where the prophet comes in. He condemns their ignorance and reminds them that this is not what God wants of them.

The restoration of Israel will not happen miraculously simply by fasting. What God expects of them is to create a just society. *'Share your bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor. Then will your wound be quickly healed over.'* Just practicing rituals will not bring about change. God wants us to fast from injustice and division, from the clenched fist and the wicked word. Only when they learn to show compassion to one another, will Israel be restored.

In the Gospel today, Jesus takes up the teaching of the prophet Isaiah. What is the mission of Jesus' disciples and how will they accomplish it? Their mission is not to be more observant in rituals. Prayer and piety are a given and expected from each one but that alone is insufficient. The disciples of Jesus are called to be the salt of the earth and light of the world. While salt is used in tiny quantities and a lamp is small relative to the size of the room, they make a huge difference to the food and the surroundings. In the same way, disciples, though few in number, can make a huge difference. The mission of disciples is to bring about conversion in others by the example of their own lives. If they can't do that, then there's no point.

That is the task given to all disciples of Jesus.

Reflection by Fr. Gerard Louis, CSSr

Readings & responses for the week

Sunday, 5 FEBRUARY	Is 58:7-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5, Mt 5:13-16 The good man is a light in the darkness for the upright.
Monday, 6 FEBRUARY SS. Paul Miki and Companions	Gen 1:1-19; Mk 6:53-56 May the Lord rejoice in his works!
Tuesday, 7 FEBRUARY	Gen 1:20-2:4; Mk 7:1-13 How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!
Wednesday, 8 FEBRUARY St. Jerome Emiliani, St. Josephine Bakhita	Gen 2:4-9, 15-17; Mk 7:14-23 Bless the Lord, my soul!
Thursday, 9 FEBRUARY	Gen 2:18-25; Mk 7:24-30 O blessed are those who fear the Lord.
Friday, 10 FEBRUARY St. Scholastica	Gen 3:1-8; Mk 7:31-37 Happy the man whose offense is forgiven.
Saturday, 11 FEBRUARY Our Lady of Lourdes	Gen 3:9-24; Mk 8:1-10 O Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to the next.

NOVENA DEVOTIONS ON SATURDAY

8.00am, 10.00am, 12.00pm,
4.00pm, 6.00pm

2.00pm (Mandarin)

MASS ON WEEKDAYS

12:15pm, 6.30pm

9.00am Public Holiday

(confession will be 30 minutes before Mass)

MASS ON SATURDAY

7.00am

MASS ON SUNDAY

8.00am, 10.00am, 12.00pm, 5.30pm

(confession will be 30 minutes before Mass)

RECEPTION OPERATING HOURS

Monday to Friday
9.00am to 8.00pm

Lunch Hour
11.45am to 12.45pm

Saturday
7.30am to 7.00pm

Sunday
8.30am to 1.30pm & 4.30pm to 7.00pm

SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES UPDATE

No booking is required. There will not be standing room allowed in the main church.

Labourers in the Vineyard Retreat

The Labourers in the Vineyard Retreat is an invitation to discover who we are in the eyes of God our Father, and to experience a renewal in the way we respond to that identity. This 5 day stay-in retreat is for anyone who desires to deepen their relationship with God or is interested in discovering more about their faith.

Sign up today!
<https://one.org.sg/event/2023-labourers-in-the-vineyard-retreat/>

Dates: 9 to 13 March 2023
Venue: Majodi Centre, Johor, Malaysia
Retreat Fees: S\$400 (inclusive of accommodation, transport and daily meals)



"Who am I really, to you, O Lord?"

An experience of discovering ourselves through the eyes of our Father.

LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD RETREAT

Talks | Praise & Worship | Spiritual Sessions

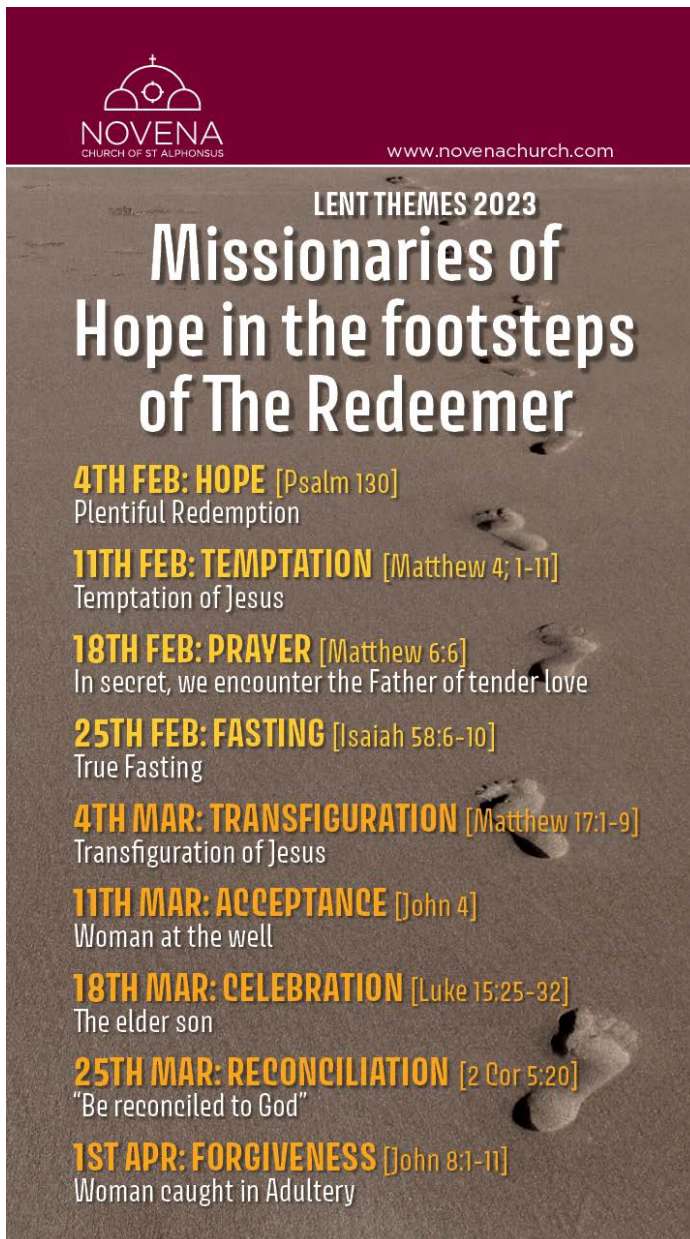
9 - 13 March 2023
 MAJODI Centre, Johor, Malaysia

Retreat Fees: S\$400 (incl. accommodation, transport, meals)
 Retreat Master: Rev Fr. Terence Pereira and Gloria Paim Ministry
 Registration closes on 20 February 2023.
 Limited seats available, sign up today!

Sign up today!

www.one.org.sg

Lenten Novena Themes



NOVENA
 CHURCH OF ST ALPHONSUS

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LENT THEMES 2023

Missionaries of Hope in the footsteps of The Redeemer

4TH FEB: HOPE [Psalm 130]
 Plentiful Redemption

11TH FEB: TEMPTATION [Matthew 4; 1-11]
 Temptation of Jesus

18TH FEB: PRAYER [Matthew 6:6]
 In secret, we encounter the Father of tender love

25TH FEB: FASTING [Isaiah 58:6-10]
 True Fasting

4TH MAR: TRANSFIGURATION [Matthew 17:1-9]
 Transfiguration of Jesus

11TH MAR: ACCEPTANCE [John 4]
 Woman at the well

18TH MAR: CELEBRATION [Luke 15:25-32]
 The elder son

25TH MAR: RECONCILIATION [2 Cor 5:20]
 "Be reconciled to God"

1ST APR: FORGIVENESS [John 8:1-11]
 Woman caught in Adultery

Old Palms

Collection of old palms will take place from 1st to 19th February 2023. The collection boxes will be placed at the Foyer and Prayer Garden.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday Masses will be on 22nd February 2023 at 12.15pm and 7.30pm.

Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will commence on 24th February at 6pm and it will be held every Friday during Lent followed by Mass at 6.30pm.

