

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 52: 7-10.

How beautiful are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing salvation!

Second Reading: Romans 10: 9-18.

How can they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach?

Gospel: Matthew 28: 16-20.

Go and make disciples of all the nations.



Points for Reflection

Short Biography of St Joseph Freinademetz (1852-1908) Pioneer of the Divine Word Missionaries in China

Joseph Freinademetz was born on 15 April 1852 in Oies in the Dolomite Alps of Northern Italy. He was the fourth of 13 children, four of whom died soon after birth.

The Freinademetz family had a small farm; it was there and from his parents that Joseph inherited a very simple but tenacious faith and a great capacity for work.

After four years of elementary school, young Joseph was sent to school in Brixen, an 11 hour walk on foot. Here, only German was spoken and he knew very little of the language, but learned it quickly; after two years of German elementary school he was able to transfer to high school, where he showed an excellent talent for languages.

In 1872 he entered the diocesan seminary and felt called to the missions. In 1875 he was ordained a priest and was appointed as curate to St Martin's in his home area. Two years later, he met Fr Arnold Janssen, founder of a Mission House, which was soon to be known as the "Society of the Divine Word". In August 1878, with the Bishop's permission, Fr Joseph left for the Mission House in Steyl, the Netherlands.

On 2 March 1879 he received his mission cross from the Papal Nuncio and departed for China together with Fr John Baptist Anzer, another Divine Word Missionary priest. On 20 April they arrived in Hong Kong. Under the guidance of another Italian missionary, Fr Louis Piazzoli (later bishop of Hong Kong), Fr Joseph began a two-year "mission novitiate" in Saikung, a small station in a remote region of Hong Kong. He made also an apostolic exploratory tour to Lantao Island.

The next two years were difficult ones and proved essential to Fr Joseph's spiritual "inner transformation" and human and cultural growth. Externally he became Chinese: his black European cassock was replaced by a blue Chinese robe and his leather shoes by cloth ones; his reddish-blond hair was cut short except for a crop in the back to which a black ponytail was fastened. Even his name became "Fu Shenfu"—"Lucky Priest".

There remained, however, his "European mentality", and he soon became frustrated and disillusioned. For Fr Joseph, to be a missionary meant to win souls for the Catholic faith, but he soon learned that trying to form Christian communities was far from easy. Much of the time, too, the priest was on his own for weeks at a time, since Fr Piazzoli took advantage of his presence to visit the outstations. Furthermore, Fr Joseph found it difficult to understand the Chinese mindset, and trying to arouse interest in the faith among the people was a distinct challenge; many came to Fr Joseph, not to listen to his message, but to see his "exotic European" presence.

Personal disappointments, difficulties of physical adjustment and the lack of success forced Fr Joseph to reflect on his vocation, freeing him from his narrow way of thinking. He also began to realize that it was crucial to study the Chinese thought, customs, character and disposition.

But it was during these initial years that he also found the spiritual foundation on which to build his life in China. In his Shandong Mission, which Fr Joseph reached in May 1881, he dedicated much energy to the formation of catechists and prepared a catechetical manual in Chinese. He put great effort into the preparation, spiritual formation and ongoing education of Chinese priests and other missionaries.

At different times he served as administrator for the mission, rector of the seminary, spiritual director for the first group of Chinese priests and as provincial superior. He was respected for the brotherly manner in which he exercised his authority and especially for his life of prayer. Even when he had to work until late at night, he still made time for prayer and spiritual reading.

Fr Joseph was also appointed to take the place of the Bishop whenever he would travel outside of China, and at the end of 1907, while he was serving as diocesan administrator for the sixth time, there was an outbreak of typhus. Without concern for the risk to his own health, he continued visiting the communities until he himself became infected with the disease; he died on 28 January 1908 in Taikia, the central seat of the Mission.

Fr Joseph Freinademetz learned to discover the greatness and beauty of Chinese culture and to love deeply the people to whom he had been sent. He once wrote: "I love China and the Chinese; I want to die among them and be laid to rest among them". He did and he was.

Fr Joseph Freinademetz was beatified by Pope Paul VI on 19 October 1975 and canonized by Pope John Paul II on 5 October 2003.

Sacred Heart Church Sai Kung (E-mail: sacredheart@netvigator.com)			
Phone:	Office hours: 27922967 (with answering machine) After office hours: 27920181 Fax: 27922967	Eucharistic Celebrations: Sundays: 9.00 am (English) 7.45 am (Chinese) 10.30 am (Chinese)	
Parish Priest:	Fr Carlo Tei carlotei@gmail.com Fr Sergio Ticozzi, Sr Mary Leung (helping on Sundays)	Anticipated Sunday Masses Saturdays: 6.00 pm (English) 7.30 pm (Chinese) Public holidays: 8.00 am (Chinese) Weekdays: 7.00 am (Chinese)	
Secretary:	Miss Tse Choi Ping Office hours: Mon-Fridays: 9.00am – 1.00pm; 2.00pm – 5.30pm Sundays: 8.45am – 12 noon	Confessions: Sundays before Mass and during the 7.45 am Mass Weekdays on call	
Parish Council	Chairlady: Miss Candy Chan Tel: 23265322	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Thursdays: 2.30 pm 1 st Thursday of the month: 8.00 pm	

Announcements

On **Sunday 25 January** at **8.00 pm** there shall be a **Thanksgiving Mass** to mark the **Chinese New Year's Eve**, and on **Monday 26 January** at **9.00 am** there shall be a **Mass to mark the Chinese New Year's Day**. Both Masses .will be in Chinese..