



ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

MONTHLY ENGLISH BULLETIN

December 2020

WHAT TO HOPE FOR

by Fr. Jerry Cusumano, S.J.

Advent

Advent is the Season of Hope. Through its biblical prayers and readings, the Church re-lives the historical period from humanity's fall from grace to the promise of a Savior and its fulfillment. For us who live after the historical coming of the Savior and look forward to the Savior's final victory, we are challenged to make clear what we really hope for.

Hope

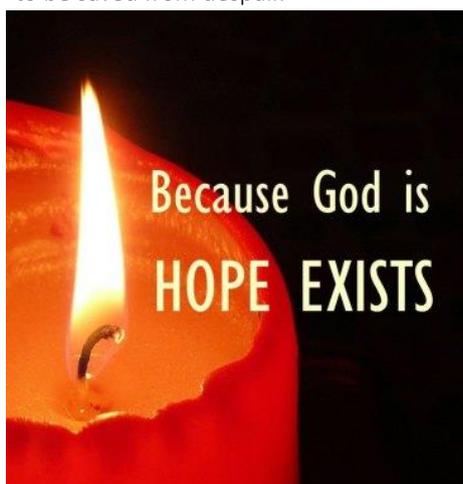
I vividly recall a question by a participant in an introductory course in Christianity I was giving. I had been talking about having hope and being saved rather abstractly, basically parroting the teaching without any of my own personalization. A young woman asked: "Saved from what?" I had no answer. Now as I think about it, a good answer would have been: "Saved from despair." Advent is the Season of Hope in which we come to understand not only what salvation is and how we are saved, but also what it is we are saved from.

Covid-19

I would be more than dishonest if I said that I hoped for anything more right now than an end to the pandemic COVID-19. I'm tired of wearing a mask, tired of seeing other people, places, and situations as threatening to infect me, and tired of being tired of COVID-19. But does such a hope have a place in Advent, the Season of Hope? Does it have any relationship to salvation and Christian hope?

Despair

Hoping for an end to the pandemic can simply seem to rehash the unsolvable problem of evil. Where does it come from? How can an all-powerful and all-loving God allow it? The Book of Wisdom (1:13) warns us not to go down that path: "God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living." The current pandemic is just one of many paths leading to death. It is a vivid reminder that all diseases, illnesses, accidents, and so on, all those things we wish to avoid, are all connected to the final act of death, which is why we need to be saved from despair.



Prayer of Hope

How can we hope when faced with the inevitability of death and all the "minuses" in life which lead up to it? No matter how much we pray and hope to avoid death and all that leads up to it, that hope will not be realized. To answer



this question, I have often been consoled by the prayer of St Claude la Columbière, the Jesuit who accompanied St Margaret Mary Alacoque when she had received revelations concerning the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Here are his words of hope.

"My God, I believe most firmly that you watch over all who hope in you and that we can want for nothing when we rely upon you in all things. Therefore, I am resolved for the future to have no anxieties, and to cast all my cares upon you. ... Let others seek happiness in their wealth, in their talents. Let them trust in the purity of their lives, the severity of their mortifications, in the number of their good works, the fervor of their prayers. As for me, O my God, in my very confidence lies all my hope."

Hope Itself

I think St Claude's prayer answers my question about whether hoping for an end to the pandemic has a place in Advent, the Season of Hope. I think his answer tells us that when we hope in the face of the inevitable, we are hoping in Hope itself. Jesus Is Hope itself. To hope for the end to the pandemic is to place our confidence in Hope itself.



Fr Ryūichirō Hanafusa, our Pastor, issued some important notices in November to guide us during this year's Advent and Christmas seasons. Here are some salient points:



1 About Christmas Mass.

In the current situation wherein the risk of infection in Tokyo remains high, it is very difficult for a large number freely to attend Mass. It is basically recommended to participate online. Only a small number can make a reservation and participate in the church. Details will be announced on the parish website etc. as soon as they are available.



2 About Christmas donations

There have been many requests from overseas, but this year's donations will go for an ecology project in Sri Lanka c/o Fr Thierry Roboüam SJ, Director of the Jesuit Spirituality Center there. Although St Ignatius Church is also in a difficult financial situation, we should support people who are suffering from poverty at such a difficult time as now. Usually, profits from the usual Christmas Bazaar are donated, but since the bazaar was cancelled this year, a special Christmas donation during Advent, using either a donation bag set in the chapel or a postal transfer form will be used.

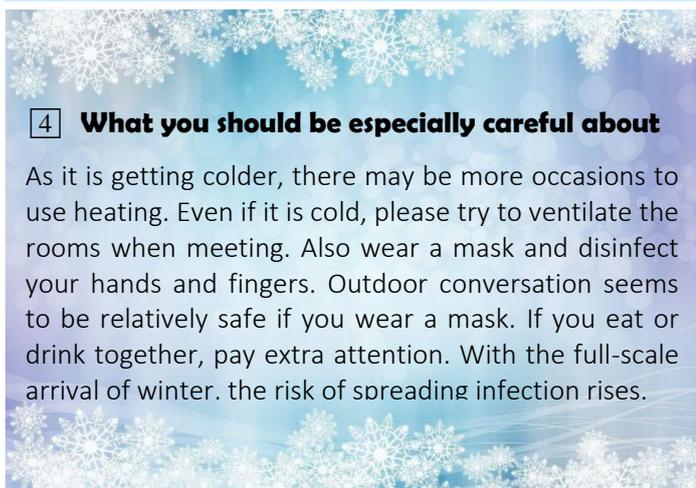


3 Requests and changes regarding Mass

1. Regarding social distancing in the chapel, families and couples living together may sit together.
2. Please refrain from attending Mass in other churches. Parishioners of St Ignatius should attend Mass only here. If you prefer to go to a nearby church, please consider transferring there.
3. The 12:00 noon Mass on Saturdays is only for the elderly and the sick, with no need for a reservation.
4. Registration in advance is needed for all Masses, even on weekdays. As we expect a significant decrease in income this year, *we are asking for a donation whenever you attend any Mass.* Your cooperation is appreciated.
5. Be sure to take your temperature at home before coming to church. If you are not feeling well, please pray at home so as to protect others.

4 What you should be especially careful about

As it is getting colder, there may be more occasions to use heating. Even if it is cold, please try to ventilate the rooms when meeting. Also wear a mask and disinfect your hands and fingers. Outdoor conversation seems to be relatively safe if you wear a mask. If you eat or drink together, pay extra attention. With the full-scale arrival of winter, the risk of spreading infection rises.



ローマ教皇、
38年ぶり
来日決定。

東京・広島・長崎
11月23日(土)~26日(火)



5 First Anniversary of the Pope's visit to Japan

Some people may have already forgotten about this due to the pandemic. Let us recall the experience, the Pope's message and the many blessings received. What impressed you? What challenge did you feel? The fact that Pope Francis came to Japan just before the pandemic was part of God's plan and grace. His visit gave us *hints* on how to live amid the coronavirus. Now let us share the joy of the Gospel and keep in mind the importance of life.



The Catholic Faith

How St Francis of Assisi Invented the First Nativity Scene



Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 at Greccio, central Italy, in an attempt to place the emphasis of Christmas upon the worship of Christ rather than upon secular materialism and gift giving.

Francis' inspiration came after traveling to the Holy Land and seeing the traditional site of Christ's birth. He wanted to re-enact the humble setting. The poverty of it all had a great impact on him and so, in 1223, he had a novel idea—to celebrate the birth of Jesus by recreating the experience of the first Christmas. He did this not with statues inside a church, but with animals in a humble hilltop grove. Franciscan Friar Thomas of Celano narrates the rest of the story:

About 15 days before the Nativity of the Lord, Francis said to a friend in Greccio, "...I would make memorial of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, and in some sort behold with bodily eyes his infant hardships—how he lay in a manger on the hay with the ox and the ass standing by." There Simplicity was honored, Poverty exalted, Humility commended, and in Greccio there was made as it were a new Bethlehem. The night was lit up as the day and was delightful to men and beasts ... Francis stood before the manger, full of sighs, overcome with tenderness and filled with wondrous joy. The solemnities of Mass were celebrated over the manger and the priest enjoyed a new consolation.

According to St Bonaventure, a miracle also occurred on that night and someone noticed St. Francis holding the Christ Child. A certain valiant and veracious soldier affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvelously beautiful sleeping in the manger, whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake him from sleep. The scene was powerful for all present and emphasized the poverty into which Christ was born. It was truly "Franciscan" in every sense of the word.

The idea caught on quickly, and in 1291 the first Franciscan Pope, Nicholas IV, commissioned statues to create the first permanent Nativity scene in the Roman Basilica of St Mary Major. Ever since then, Nativity scenes in all shapes and sizes have been created throughout the world and they are one of the most popular Christmas traditions.



"Reliquary of the Holy Crib in Sta. Maria Magiore in Rome"



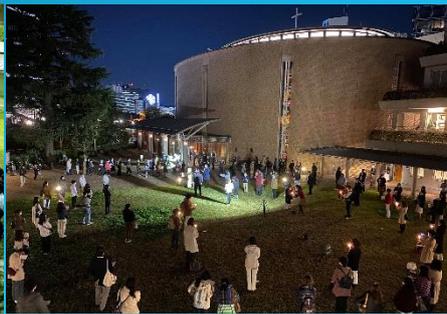
"Vatican Nativity"

St. Ignatius Church News and Events

October 25, Month of the Rosary



"Living Rosary Pre-Pandemic Times"



"This Year's Living Rosary"

November 2, All Soul's Day



November 15, Infant Baptism



Sakura "Clara" Kabe

November 21, Three Events in One Day

Worldwide Adoration in Preparation for the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress Next Year in Budapest, Hungary



National Catholic Awareness Conference Japan

One Year after Pope Francis' Visit to Japan



"Neil Day, organizer of the NCACJ"

"Pope's arrival in Haneda"



"Kanniya Eco-Sewing Center, Sri Lanka"



Typhoon Ulysses 2020



"Fr. Robouam, SJ, Director"

November 29, Advent and Christmas Donation

St. Ignatius Church News and Events

Oct. 25, Month of the Rosary

Even the Living Rosary had to be modified because of the pandemic. To observe social distancing, the shape was different from previous ones. Nevertheless, everyone's love for the Blessed Mother and their faith in the power of her intercession through the recitation of the Rosary did not wane. Many came, representing the many faces of the international community of St. Ignatius—Filipinos, Latin Americans, Japanese, Vietnamese, Africans, Europeans, etc. Since it was held in the early evening, with candles glowing in the dark, an atmosphere conducive to meditation was set as everyone prayed with all their hearts for the healing of humanity and of the earth, our "common home".

Nov. 2, All Soul's Day

This Commemoration is quite popular, especially for migrants who cannot return to their home countries and visit the graves of their beloved dead. Many were consoled by writing the names of their family members, relatives, friends on small sheets of paper prepared beforehand. They placed them in the big wooden box outside to be later offered in the Mass. This day, the 12:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. English Masses were full to the allowed capacity and many more went to Xavier Chapel to follow the liturgy and receive Holy Communion.

Nov. 15, Infant Baptism

Welcome to the Christian world! There were several others who wanted to have their babies baptized too on this day but were simply afraid of bringing them to church for fear of exposure to infection. Some other parents were not able to submit the necessary documents required because they still had to request them from their home countries which at this moment are in lockdown!

Nov. 15, One Year after the Visit of Pope Francis to Japan

Do you remember the life-size image of Pope Francis which was displayed a year ago in front of Joseph Hall before his official visit to Japan?

This Sunday, it was placed in front of the Main Church. Parishioners were encouraged to write a message addressed to God or to the Pope of how they feel in these pandemic times, what they think we should do from here on, etc. Did you write your message? There is still time to do so, as this project continues till January of next year.

Nov. 21, Three Events in One Day

National Catholic Awareness Conference Japan. Many John de Britto Center volunteers and leaders, including the Coordinators and Japanese parishioners, participated in this ZOOM webinar. The speakers were very good and the topics interesting, relevant, and helpful, especially for the pastoral mission of the Center. It is recommended that the videos of this Conference be taken up, in due time, in the Faith Formation Class for Adults, as further discussion of the topics would definitely enrich members, including non-Catholics, in understanding and appreciating the faith and its actual practice in daily life.

Participation in the "Worldwide Eucharistic Adoration" in preparation for the Eucharistic Congress 2021 in Budapest, Hungary. Through the initiative of some members of John de Britto and with the support of Fr Bony James, St Ignatius registered in this event which many countries all over the world participated in. The Adoration took place in St. Mary's Chapel from 4:00-5:00 p.m. Around 15 parishioners, foreigners and Japanese alike, took part.

One Year after Pope Francis' Visit to Japan. In collaboration with the Catholic Jesuit Center of Sophia University, leaders and members of the SIIYM served as staff, facilitators, and translators of this online event from 6:00-9:30 p.m. Jesuit Provincial Fr Renzo de Luca shared on "Pope Francis' Encounter with Japan—a Close-up View," helping the participants re-experience the event and giving them a chance in small group "chats" to reflect on the impact of his visit, his message, and what they can do to put into action to "Protect All Life." There was also a very good presentation on "Refugees in

Japan under COVID-19," based on research and documentation by Sophia students. Under the supervision of Professor David Slater, the presenter said, "It is not so much about how we felt when the Pope visited, but what we did to put his message into practice!" The last session was a free-wheeling Q/A event in which anybody could ask Fr James Martin, SJ, questions on any topic that interested them. Overall, the event was not just a great chance for collaboration between the SIIYM and Sophia University students, but likewise a challenge for St Ignatius Church and the University on how to continue accompanying the young in their life journey through Jesuit education.

Nov. 29, Advent and Christmas Donation

As mentioned on page 2, this year's collection will go to Sri Lanka. However, because of two recent typhoons in the Philippines a week apart from each other, it was decided that the amount collected will be divided between the two countries.

Sri Lanka: Collaborating in Care for our Common Home is one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) of the Society of Jesus. To concretize this, the Loyola Center for Ecology and Justice has requested logistics management funding for one of their projects—the Kanniya Eco-Sewing Centre. It is to help low-income families belonging to marginalized minorities reduce their consumption of plastic, which is seen as one concrete solution to the environmental crisis in the District of Trincomalee.

The Philippines: The gravity of the situation in the country was such that even Pope Francis wrote in his Twitter account: "*I am near in prayer to the dear people of the Philippines who are suffering because of the destruction and especially because of the flooding caused by a strong typhoon. I express my solidarity to the poorest families and those who are doing all they can to help them.*" The donation will go to the Bicol Region, one of the hardest hit areas, c/o the Jesuits of Ateneo de Naga University. It will be used to help especially the neediest in their arduous road to recovery.

Feature Article

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS 2020

By Sr Flor Florece, FI



Christmas is less than three weeks away. I wonder what people have in mind as it draws near. The Bulletin asked people of different nationalities to share their thoughts:

Christmas 2020 will be a very unusual one due to the pandemic. It will not be the normal celebration we know. We will have to be more creative and forego so many material things which actually are not necessary. (Adelfa, Filipina)

Christmas 2020 will be holy and quiet like the hush of falling snow. It will be like beholding the Nativity scene in silent awe and wonder. We will have the greatest gift: "Christ has been born to us." We need nothing more. (Yoko, Japanese)

I feel more eager for Christmas to come in spite of all the negativities or darkness surrounding our world right now. Our Savior will be born. He is the light to come into a dark and dying world. Is not that the true meaning of Christmas? (Carol, Filipina)

It will be a bit odd because we cannot travel as usual and have fun with loved ones, but it will be a good chance to explore the opportunities around us and experience more deeply the reasons for happiness. (Chris, Nigerian)

When I think of Christmas 2020, I am overwhelmed with gratitude that my family, loved ones, and I are healthy and COVID free, while many in the world are suffering. As much as most of us are experiencing COVID stress, I know that I must be more patient, stay positive, and have faith that this pandemic will be controlled soon. This Christmas will be different, but the love and spirit are the same as every year. (Mary, Chinese)

This Christmas is more likely to be a blue Christmas for all of us due to the pandemic. But more blessings of Christ's Love, Peace, and Joy will make it a bright one. Merry Christmas to all! (Paul, Myanmar)

This will be a very unusual Christmas. I wish everybody could celebrate together, but unfortunately only a few can attend the Mass. I feel sad about that. (Yoko, Japanese).

It has been a hard year, having to start adapting to "the new normal," We have seen great sadness, chaos, separation, loss, and discrimination. But at the same time, we can feel HOPE. Put trust in God and pray consistently and eventually that what you are hoping for will be given to you. (Anh, Vietnamese)

Christmas comes at the end of what has been a very challenging year. On Christmas day, I will be in quarantine with my wife, having just moved back to Australia. Being isolated in a hotel will allow us the chance to appreciate the fact that we have managed to stay together and be safe through it all, aware that others have not been so lucky. I really hope that next year marks the beginning of a bright future, not just for us as a newlywed couple, but for the rest of the world. (Dylan, Australian)

Regardless of the pandemic situation, I look forward to the inner joy and excitement that accompany the celebration of Christmas. Christmas 2020 will show us the need for a deeper appreciation of one another. We are not absolute in ourselves. Whatever affects our neighbors has a way of affecting us. Hence, the need to reach out with love and great compassion. (Chika, Nigeria)

If we lend one another a hand, the miracles of Christmas Day will last all year. (Danilo, Italian)

I wish to cherish the season with my wife and child. This will be our son's second Christmas, and we hope to make it special for him. St Augustine once mentioned that it was fitting that God became incarnate during the darkest, coldest time of the year as a sign of the reversal of mankind's fortunes. Similarly, Christmas 2020 will coincide with much suffering due to the spiking pandemic, but I hope it will renew our hope in a reversal of our fortunes. (Ryan, American)

Last but not the least, I would like to share with you this beautiful poem I came across. It was written by Fr Javier Leoz, a parish priest from Pamplona, Spain as he mulls over Christmas in these pandemic times. He has gladly consented to its publication. I am sharing with you the English version.

Will There Be Christmas?

Of course!
 More silent and with more depth
 More like unto the first one, when Jesus was born in solitude.
 Without many lights on earth, but with the star of Bethlehem
 Shining on paths of life in its immensity.
 Without colossal royal processions but with the humility of feeling as if we are
 shepherds, young and old, seeking the Truth.
 Without big tables and with bitter absences
 but with the presence of a God who will fill everything.

Will there be Christmas?

Of course!
 Without streets overflowing with people,
 with our hearts burning
 for the One who is about to arrive.
 Without noise or festivals,
 complaints or stampedes ...
 but living the Mystery without fear
 of the "COVID-Herod" that tries to rob us even of the dream of waiting.

There will be Christmas because GOD is on our side and He shares, as Christ did in a manger, our poverty, trials, tears, anguish, and orphanhood. There will be Christmas because we need a divine light amid such darkness. COVID-19 will never be able to reach the heart or soul of those who put their hope and their high ideal in heaven.

**THERE WILL BE CHRISTMAS!
 WE WILL SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS!
 GOD WILL BE BORN AND WILL BRING US FREEDOM!**

Yes, Christmas 2020 can truly be more like the first one. It will be simpler, quieter than in previous years. As a result, it can better honor the birth of Jesus, the real reason for the celebration. The end of this year is likely to be less hectic, but that is just the point. It is an opportunity to contemplate the First Christmas in its pristine form! The pandemic can be "a purifier" for mankind, bringing back the original Christian spirit of two thousand years ago which we in the post-modern era have been progressively robbed of!

Previous and Upcoming Events

Remember These?

(Images of Pre-Pandemic Christmas)



"SIYIM Carolling"



"International Christmas Party"



"Sunday School Christmas Party"




ST IGNATIUS CHURCH

Advent Recollection

With Fr. Jerry Cusumano, SJ
December 20, 2020 | 09:30 AM | ST. JOSEPH HALL

First come, first served for the first 50 participants who register online.
Scan the QR code to register ->




Year-End Retreat

When: December 31, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Place: St. Joseph Hall
Theme: The EXAMEN,
An Effective Tool to Attain Holiness
Retreat Master: Fr. Daniel Collins, SJ

Fr. Collins will talk about the Daily Examen, an important element in Ignatian Spirituality, in the morning session and the year-end Examen in the afternoon. There will be plenty of space for silent prayer and faith-sharing in small groups. There will be opportunity for Confession, and the Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 3:30 p.m. The Faith Sharing Ministry will sponsor the event. Attendance is limited to 50 persons. Please inquire as early as possible at the English Center on how to register.

Important Reminders

Schedule of Masses and Celebrants

| SUNDAY | 12:00 NN | 4:30 PM |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| December 6 | FR. SALI, SJ | FR. LUHATA, SJ |
| December 13 | FR. DOYLE, SJ | FR. WESSELS, SJ |
| December 20 | FR. CUSUMANO, SJ | FR. LUHATA, SJ |
| December 24* | (10:30 PM) FR. BONY, SJ | |
| December 25* | FR. WESSELS, SJ | FR. JODY, SJ |
| December 27 | FR. VELIATH, SJ | FR. DOYLE, SJ |

December 8, Tuesday. There will be an English Mass in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary at 12:00 p.m. in St. Mary's Chapel to be celebrated by Fr. Bony.

* can be viewed on You Tube

Pope's Prayer Intentions for December 2020

For a Life of Prayer

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

Mission 2030 Prayer Intention:

December 2020

May we, who cannot gather together and pray, celebrate the birth of Jesus, who brings light in darkness, through prayer and work, wherever we are.

Staff of St. Ignatius Church

Pastor: Fr. Ryuichiro Hanafusa, S.J.

Associate and Support Priests:

Fr. Sang-won Lee S.J. Fr. Bony James S.J.
 Fr. Manuel Silgo S.J. Fr. Generoso Florez S.J.
 Fr. Javier Garralda S.J.

Brother: Bro. Hiroaki Yoshiba S.J.
 Sister: Sr. Ivette Sanchez, M.C.

John de Britto English Center:

Fr. Bony James, S.J. Director

Sr. Leny Fery FdCC Sr. Flor Florece FI



<http://www.stignatius.jp/>



<https://www.facebook.com/stignatius.jp/>

English Mass Registration

12:00 NN

4:30 PM



FROM US TO YOU!
 The John de Britto English Center
 wishes you a GRACE-FILLED Christmas Season
 and a HOPE-FILLED New Year!