

# ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Ignatius Church, Tokyo  
Celebrating 25 years

June - July 2024

BI-MONTHLY ENGLISH BULLETIN

## God's Hands Writing History

By Sr. Flor Florece, F.I.

Have you seen the many posters lined up all over the church premises announcing the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dedication of the Present Church? If you look closer, they contain an outline of the Schedule of Events in various languages. But is our church "that young"? For those who have been coming to St. Ignatius Church for more than 25 years, they will definitely say, "NO!" It has a history that goes back 75 years!

In this issue of the Bulletin, we would like to share with you the history of St. Ignatius Church as outlined by our present pastor, Fr. Toshiaki Koso SJ, in his Sunday homily April 21, 2024. The original text was in Japanese and below are some excerpts:

Today marks the 75th anniversary of the birth of our St. Ignatius Church. On Easter Sunday April 17, 1949, a solemn Mass to dedicate the church was celebrated by Archbishop Tatsuo Doi. But this church actually dates back to the Kōjimachi Parish Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, established 88 years ago in 1936 and located in 6-Banchō, down beyond Futaba Gakuen on a site vacated by a Carmelite monastery which had moved to Nerima.

In 1945, towards the end World War II, Tokyo experienced massive air raids. Not only the Church of St. Thérèse but also the residences in this area, where we are now, were all burnt down. In the meantime, Mass was held inside Sophia University.

Interesting questions arise. Why did the church become St. Ignatius Church? Why was it

possible to build a church in such a prime location within the outer moat of the Imperial Palace? How was it possible to build such a large church so soon after Japan's defeat, when supplies were scarce?

Around that time, funds for rebuilding churches that had been burned down arrived from the Vatican, but Archbishop Paulo Marella, the Vatican ambassador to Japan at the time, suggested to Archbishop Doi that the funds received be used to rebuild other churches and leave the rebuilding of Kōjimachi Church (with approximately 1,200 members) to the Society of Jesus. Fr Bruno Bitter, the financial administrator of the Society of Jesus at the time, accepted this proposal and declared that he would definitely build a church suitable for the new era. They also had to look for a new location.

The Jesuits negotiated with various landowners in the Kōjimachi area and acquired a property measuring 7,300 tsubo. It is said that there was also a Shiratama Inari shrine located right at our present Main Gate. According to old records, this shrine is said to be the li family's guardian deity, but it was burnt down in the air raid. When the Jesuits negotiated with them, the manager, who was a very good man, gave the land saying "Western gods will live in place of Japanese gods."

On May 12, 1948, while construction was underway, a letter arrived from the Holy See declaring that the new church being built be given the privilege of being a "permanent religious parish," that is, a parish church entrusted to a religious order, the Society of Jesus, for an indefinite period of time.

On August 8, 1948, the groundbreaking ceremony was held. The design director was Jesuit Brother Ignatius Gropper. On April 17,

1949, Kōjimachi Church, now re-named St. Ignatius Church, was born. The church was referred to as a "giant wooden ship." It was as high as a 3-story building and was made of wood and mortar. Records show that the large pieces of wood used in the beams were ordered from Canada. The main altar and side altars made of beautiful white marble, were donated by believers from Brooklyn, New York. There were seven stained glass windows above the altar of the church (now located in the stairwell leading down to the crypt), other stained glass figures (now lined up behind the crypt altar), and the large stained glass window of Ignatius (now in the St Mary's Chapel)--all gifts from Belgium. The large bells that still ring came from a German company, the president of which was the brother of Fr Hermann Heuvers, the first Pastor of St. Ignatius Church. He had decided to collect iron materials his company had used to make weapons of war and make them instruments for peace, instead. Fr. Koso concluded: As we look back on the history of our church, we realize that it has been multinational from the beginning, and that many people in the Catholic world have contributed to St. Ignatius church. Thanks to their goodwill and support, we are now able to celebrate our 75th and 25th anniversaries. In all of this, we can sense God's mercy and plan. So, I would like to repeat today's Responsorial Psalm: "Today is the day God has made, so let's sing joyfully and share this day together!"

### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary





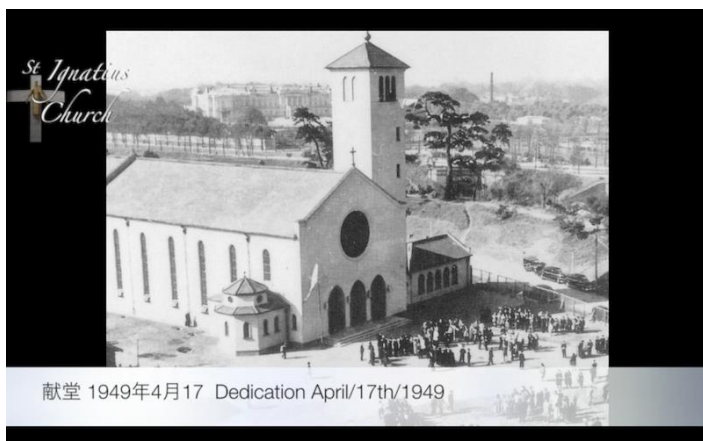
NOTE: For an account of the dedication of the present Church, please access to the English Bulletin article 09 August 2019. entitled "20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH BUILDING (THE HISTORY BEHIND)" by Fr Luis Cangas, SJ. The original was published in Japanese in the June 1996 issue of MAGIS and translated to English by Ryan Hicks.



St. Therese Church circa 1936



Sophia University, 1945



St. Ignatius Church, 1949



Initial Construction, 1996, of the present Church



Aerial view of the present church

CREDITS to: <https://www.stignatius.jp/>

## 'May hope fill our days!'

During the Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord (May 12), Pope Francis solemnly proclaimed the theme of the upcoming **Jubilee Year 2025**: "Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint." It will begin on Christmas Eve 2024 and will draw to a close on the Solemnity of Epiphany January 6, 2026.

"In the course of the year," Pope Francis writes, "every effort should be made to enable the People of God to participate fully in its proclamation of hope in God's grace and in the signs that attest to their efficacy."

Cristopher Wells, a veteran VATICAN NEWS writer, outlined the major thoughts of Pope Francis. (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-05/pope-proclaims-jubilee-may-hope-fill-our-days.html>). Here are excerpts:

### **An opportunity to be renewed in hope**

"Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring." The Pope desires that the Jubilee might be "an opportunity for us to be renewed in hope." In particular, he invited all the particular churches throughout the world to prepare priests and the faithful for Sacramental Confession, which should be readily available throughout the year.

He invited the faithful of the Eastern Churches, especially those already in union with the Successor of Peter, to take part in the Jubilee, noting how many are already "enduring their own way of the Cross," forced to leave their lands due to violence and instability. He urged expressions of synodality and renewed efforts to further Christian unity. He appealed especially for progress toward a common celebration of Easter, noting that in 2025, providentially, all Christians will celebrate the Paschal mystery on the same day.

### **The light of Christian hope**

The Holy Father prayed, too, that during the Holy Year, "the light of Christian hope might illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all," and that "the Church might bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world."

Reading the "signs of the times," Pope Francis noted the desire for peace in a world increasingly marked by violence and conflict, and the loss of a desire to have children, with many countries facing a "demographic winter." He called for a social covenant to support and foster hope.

The Pope appealed especially for prisoners, recalling the tradition of offering amnesty or pardons during Jubilees, and said he hopes to personally open a Holy Door in a prison, "as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence." He also called for prisoners to be treated in accord with their rights and dignity, while once again pleading for the abolition of the death penalty.

Pope Francis urges that hope be offered to the sick, to the young and to the elderly – especially grandparents, to migrants, and to the poor.

The Holy Father recalled that the fruits of the earth are intended for all, and encouraged everyone to come to the assistance of the poor. In particular, he called on richer nations to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them.

The Holy Father concludes with a final note of hope, praying that "the coming Jubilee will be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God"; and that it might help us recover "the confident trust we require in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation."

"May the power of hope fill our days," the Pope says, "as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever."



*Pope reading the Papal Bull*

# ST. IGNATIUS NEWS AND CHURCH EVENTS

*As we "Walked Together" the past two months...*

## Going beyond our fences

Praise and Worship members and friends got together to sing in front of the Metro station in Yotsuya on Easter Sunday, proclaiming the Resurrection of Our Lord. Some handed out Easter greeting leaflets from St. Ignatius.

Whenever a national or international disaster occurs, St. Ignatius is quick to respond. This time it was for the Taiwan earthquake victims in Hualien. It was Taiwan's biggest earthquake in at least 25 years.

A Blood Donation Drive, spearheaded by Fr. Kiyoshi Shibata, SJ was conducted April 14 in St. Joseph Hall. As reported, 37 of the donors were first timers; 32 were male, 26, female. The biggest donors were the Vietnamese (45) followed by the Japanese (28). The Japanese Red Cross definitely needs more donors to save lives. Another one will be held in December.

Do you know there is a "Curry Group" and a "Yotsuya Onigiri Friends Group" in our parish? Every week they need about 50 kilos of rice to be distributed to people in need. They are experiencing a shortage. They welcome monthly donations.



## Conversion Ceremony

It was held during the 10:00 a.m. Japanese Mass on April 21. The youngest in the group, Kento Gray, came from the John de Britto English Center. Fr. Koso, in his homily, focusing on "The Good Shepherd," said: "There are other sheep who are not in this fold. May they too recognize his voice, be led by one Shepherd, and become one flock."

## Tsunagaru Project

The Mission 2030 Project Team initiated this activity called "Connection Project." The rationale behind it is: "We are one family, invited by God to come together. Let us deepen our connection by attending Mass in different languages." The first group, composed of thirteen participants attended the English Mass last May 12. Looking back at their experience, they wrote their evaluation:

"I hadn't spoken English in many years, so I couldn't keep up with the prayers, but it was basically the same as the Japanese Mass, so I didn't have any problems. I was very grateful for the Mass booklet in different languages."

"Since there were people from many different countries, it felt like a true Christian experience."

"Thank you very much for offering your special seats. I am grateful for this opportunity, and I believe that if you plan this kind of project again, we will be able to deepen our interaction with the multilingual believers."

## Fureai Square

Have you noticed that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month, some people are browsing books in make-shift shelves in front of Teresia Hall? Yes, you can get them for free! They also welcome donations of books in various languages, provided they are related to Christianity. Please note that they do not accept the following – magazines, recycled or damaged books. Come, you might just be lucky to find a literary treasure!



## Japanese Language Classes

Do you know that these teachers have resumed their volunteer work? They hold classes 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month from 13:00~14:30 p.m. in KIBE Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Room 303 & 305. Shown here is a Filipino couple. While their children have Sunday School, they are taking Japanese lessons. Way to "catch-up"!

# ST. IGNATIUS NEWS AND CHURCH EVENTS



## SIIYM Activities

After a series formation, the St. Ignatius International Youth Ministry's Core Leader positions were officially turned over to a new batch on 14 April at the 12 noon English Mass. In one sharing, the former representatives said that, although they went through difficult times in the transition period from Covid era to post COVID, there were many blessings received from God through serving others. They thanked the church community for their constant support. The following week, the former and current Core leaders spent a fun weekend bonding in Chiba. During Golden Week, some members made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Akita.

## Sunday School

A Year-End Evaluation was held the whole day April 6 in the convent of Notre Dame de Vie, Nerima. Facilitated by Sr. Flor Florece, F.I. and participated by all the catechists, the objective was to share their experiences and give recommendations for improvements during this fiscal year. It was likewise a great day of bonding!

As of this writing, those involved in the First Communion classes are busy preparing 18 children for their First Communion on June 2, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. The next activity to look forward to is the Family Summer Outing in Fuchū no Mori Park on August 12, a holiday.



## The Sacraments

Two infants, a Japanese-Filipino and a Nepalese-Filipino, were baptized in a ceremony held in St. Mary's Chapel May 19. As of now, five multi-cultural couples are taking their Pre-Cana course and have scheduled their wedding ceremony in St. Ignatius this year. Interestingly, a new group calling themselves "Young Couples Group" was added to the John de Britto English Center. Guided by Adelfa Armentia, TA, they aim "To grow together in faith and fellowship, supporting each other in nurturing their children in the faith." A new gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, those who went to the Pre-Cana course and were married in St. Ignatius can now have a support group to continue growing in their marital journey.

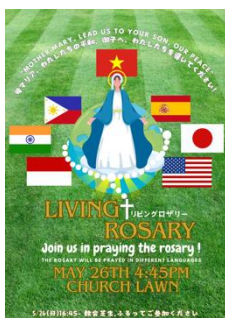


## Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist (EMHC)

Three new ministers (from India, Ghana, and the Philippines) will have their installation during the 12 noon Mass on June 30. Together with the present 13 EMHCs, they have been attending formation classes since November of last year. June 16 (Sunday) they will have a retreat to recap and deepen in prayer their sense of mission.

## International Mass on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month

April 19, Pentecost Sunday, the Pacific Islands Group led the liturgy. Leaders from Samoa and Tonga donned their native attires, the lector gave a beautiful introduction of who they are as a people, and they sang songs in their native tongues. Unique was the placing of "leis" (garlands) around the neck of the Mass celebrants during the Offertory. Worn throughout the Mass, they were said to symbolize the deep respect of the natives to the one offering Mass to God.



## Living Rosary

To end the "Month of Mary," the various language groups of St. Ignatius gathered May 26 to pray the rosary together on the church lawn. The theme was "Mother Mary, Lead Us to Your Son - Our Peace." As one big family, they presented to her the needs and the current situation of the world and the Church. Mary, inseparably united with her Son, is humankind's Advocate for GRACE, REDEMPTION, and PEACE.

# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Looking back at our PRE-CANA SEMINAR

by Ace Mark & Pearl Giselle Almoroto

*“Marriage is like building a house. You would not wish to build it on the shifting sands of emotions, but on the rock of true love, the love that comes from God.” ~Pope Francis*

### Setting the Foundation

In beginning to write this article, I look back at how marvelous God has been for allowing us to experience the beautiful gift of the Pre-Cana Seminar. Many think that it is simply a requirement in order to get married; it takes only a half-day or two. But there is more to it than just an item to be ticked off on the checklist, along with all others like the wedding motif, guest list, photographer, wedding cake, wedding dress, and the works.

We had a ten-week Pre-Seminar with Sr. Flor F.I., here at St. Ignatius Church. It was held for two hours Saturdays over a span of several months. We could have opted for the two-day program offered in other parishes, something was prodding the longer one at St. Ignatius Church. After all, if we “go the distance” to for our wedding day, which would roughly last 24 hours, should we not do the same for our marriage, which would be for a lifetime?



*The couple before their wedding*

True enough, all things worthwhile do not come easy. It was a time where we got to know ourselves and each other, and our roles as we bind ourselves in marriage under God’s care. We are individuals with our own body, mind, feelings, and spirit, and as we come together, we should have the awareness to navigate life with these differences and similarities. In a nutshell, it was very enlightening, as much as it was an eye-opener as to how much the church is supporting the community to build a family that centers on God.

### Strengthening the Pillars

As we started living together, we had our share of fights and disagreements. I remember the sessions when we were shown Pope Francis’ stand on marriage and his emphasis on the three essential words in the family: “Please”, “Sorry”, and “Thank you.” It is a great reminder to build our home with gentleness, kindness, patience, humility, and forgiveness over and over again. As a married couple, it

is imperative to continuously strive hard together to build our marital foundation through love and reconciliation, remembering our unbreakable vows and divine covenant before God.

### The Building Continues

As God faithfully bestowed on us the grace of co-creation, blessing us with a bundle of joy just two months after we got married, we faced new challenges. The opportunity to manifest what we have learned in the Pre-Cana again surfaced. We are reminded that evangelization begins at home. As parents and co-educators, we have to model what it is like to be a Christian - from simple things like daily prayers before and after sleeping, prayer before meals, praying the rosary and going to church together. More so, as husband and wife, we have to set an example to be more loving and kinder to each other.



*with their new bundle of joy!*

It goes without saying that our Pre-Cana Seminar was truly a special undertaking we both shared. Along with our wedding preparations, we consider it as one of our first accomplished projects. So much so, that when people ask us how we prepared for our

wedding, this is one of the highlights we share. We always recommend this to our friends who are thinking of tying the knot. We now urge you or someone you know who is considering getting married to go through this enriching seminar.

All in all, while there is still more that we need to learn, unlearn, and relearn, this much we know is true: God’s grace will always sustain us through and through.

# JOHN DE BRITTO ENGLISH CENTER GROUPS AND MINISTRIES

## Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

JOHN DE BRITTO ENGLISH CENTER GROUPS AND MINISTRIES

<b>ALTAR SERVERS</b>	Serve before, during, and after the English Mass assisting the priest and the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC). They are boys and girls from ages 10-15 who have already received their First Communion.
<b>ANGELS GROUP</b>	Composed of adults and young people who love children, they serve every 1st Sunday of the month. Just after the Opening Prayer of the Mass, they gather children in Xavier Chapel and provide stories of the Gospel in language understood by them.
<b>CHOIR</b>	Sings at the 12 noon Sunday English Mass. Practices in Room 401, 11:00 a.m.
<b>COFFEE WELCOME MINISTRY</b>	Serves free coffee every 1st Sunday of the month from 1:00~1:45 PM under the tree in front of the Main Church. Facilitates the opportunity for newcomers/parishioners to meet and feel that the Church is "my second home."
<b>INTERNATIONAL GROUP MEETING</b>	Held every 4th Sunday of the month, Kibe Hall Room 307, 1:45 ~3:30 PM. Gathers to plan and think of better ways to serve St. Ignatius Church.
<b>EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC)</b>	Composed of different nationalities, by turns they serve in the 12:00 noon English Mass, assist the celebrant and give Holy Communion to the faithful. Special formation is required for this ministry.
<b>FAITH FORMATION GROUP FOR ADULTS</b>	Held 1st Sunday of the month, Kibe Hall Room 310, 2:00~4:00 PM. For adult Catholics who wish to deepen their understanding of the faith through selected videos and on-line talks. Non-Catholics are welcome.
<b>SUNDAY READINGS - FAITH SHARING GROUP</b>	Held every 3rd Sunday of the month, Arrupe Hall Room 404, 2:00 ~4:00 PM. For those who want to deepen and share the Sunday Readings of that day. Everyone is welcome!
<b>READERS' GROUP</b>	Serve at the 12:00 noon Sunday English Mass. They are those who would like to proclaim the Word of God and serve as lectors guiding the assembly during the liturgical rite. Practice is required.
<b>MEDIA GROUP</b>	Prepares the Sunday Mass power point, the bi-monthly English Bulletin, makes special posters, and takes care of the English website and Facebook of St. Ignatius Church.
<b>WEEKDAY OFFICE STAFF</b>	They open the English Center on weekdays, from 10:00~3:00 PM to attend to the needs of those who come for inquiries.
<b>PRAISE AND WORSHIP GROUP</b>	Held every 1st Sunday of the month in Arrupe Hall Rm. 203B, 9:30~11:30 AM. Gathers to praise the Lord through songs, give thanks, and listen attentively to his live-giving Word. Personal intentions are received to be offered up in prayer
<b>USHERS</b>	Every Sunday during the 12:00 noon English Mass, they facilitate an orderly and prayerful atmosphere before, during, and after Mass.
<b>YOUTH MINISTRY</b>	An international group that leads the Youth Mass every 2nd Sunday of the month followed by a Youth Catechism at 1:45 PM in Kibe Hall Room 307. Conducts various activities such as the "Hangout" (3rd Sunday), Yotsuya Walk, Language Café (4th Sunday). Meet them in Room 103.

<b>INFANT / ADULT BAPTISM</b>	Schedule: 3rd Sunday of February, April, June, September, and November, Xavier Chapel, 10:00 AM Classes: To be arranged with the Coordinator in-charge
<b>MARIAGE PREPARATION</b>	Inquire at least 4 months before the wedding day.
<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>English Sunday School for Children.</b> 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, 1:30-2:30 PM. For room assignments, inquire from the English Center <b>Japanese Language Classes.</b> Schedule: 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays Time & Venue: 1:4 5 - 2:45 PM, Kibe Hall, Rm. 304, 305, 306, 307 Newcomers visit Rm. 305

**JOHN DE BRITTO ENGLISH CENTER**

Office Address: 6-5-1 Kojimachi, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 102-0083  
Office Hours: Weekdays (10:00 - 12:00, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM), Weekends (11:00 AM - 1:00 PM)  
Telephone No: 03-3263-4576

# IMPORTANT NOTICES

## Schedule of Masses, etc.

### WEEKDAYS: All in Japanese, Main Church

7:00 AM	Weekday Masses
12:00 NN / 6:00 PM	Weekday Masses
12:00 NN	Saturday Mass
6:00 PM	Anticipated Sunday Mass

### SUNDAYS:

#### Main Church

7:00 AM / 8:30 AM / 10:00 AM / 6:00 PM	Japanese Mass
12:00 NN English Mass	1:30 PM Spanish Mass
3:00 PM Vietnamese Mass	

#### Masses at Our Lady's Chapel

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday: 12:30 PM (Portuguese)	4:00 PM (Polish)
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday: 4:30 PM (Indonesian)	

*Confessions are now held inside the Main Chapel's confessionals.*

### CONFESSION

Weekday/Saturday	17:30-18:30
Sunday (Japanese)	9:30-10:30
	17:30-18:30
(English)	11:30-12:30
(Spanish)	13:00-14:30

## Staff of St. Ignatius Church

**Pastor:** Fr. Toshiaki Koso, S.J.

### Associate and Support Priests:

Fr. Saturnino Ochoa, SJ	Fr. Kiyoshi Shibata S.J.
Fr. Bony James S.J.	Fr. Manuel Silgo S.J.
Fr. Nguyen Thanh Nha S.J.	Fr. Javier Garralda S.J.
Fr. Nguyen Van The S.J.	Fr. Etsuo Sekine, SJ
Fr. Kenzo Nakamura, S.J.	

### Sister:

Sr. Marcela Rocas, M.C.

### John de Britto English Center:

Fr. Bony James, S.J.	Director
Sr. Flor Florece, FI.	Coordinator
Jessie Buendia, NDV	Coordinator

## CHURCH WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGE



English Website:  
<http://stignatius.jp/en/>

## Important Liturgical Dates to Remember

June	
2	The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
7	The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
8	Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
29	Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul
July	
1	Memorial of Blessed Kibe and 187 Martyrs
31	Memorial of St. Ignatius of Loyola

## Important Church Events

June	
4	Pipe Organ and Prayer
6	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dedication of the Present Church
9	Sunday Masses Commemorating the Anniversary Opening of the 1996 Time Capsule
23	Confirmation Ceremony Mission 2030: Talk, Prayer and Spiritual Dialogue (Part 1)
July	
28	International Ignatian Youth Day Eucharistic Adoration

## Pope's Prayer Intentions

### June: For migrants fleeing their homes

We pray that migrants fleeing from war or hunger, forced to undertake journeys full of danger and violence, find welcome and new opportunities in the countries that receive them.

### July: For the pastoral care of the sick

We pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick confer to those who receive it and their loved ones the power of the Lord and become ever more a visible sign of compassion and hope for all.

For all those who made this Bi-monthly Bulletin possible, we express our deepest gratitude.  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH and GOD BLESS!