



St. Ignatius Catholic Church

Bi-Monthly English Bulletin

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR (?)

by Robert Chiesa, SJ



Credits: Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus

We have come to the end of Liturgical Year C, and with the First Sunday of Advent, we begin a new Liturgical Year. So! Happy New (Liturgical) Year!

Luke's Gospel for Year C took us on the journey of Jesus toward his destiny in Jerusalem. "Now as the time drew near for Jesus to be taken up into heaven, he resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him." The gospel passages from Luke 9:51 to 19:27 are all situated within this journey toward Jerusalem.

How fitting it was to accompany Jesus on that journey during this 2025 Holy Year, when, as Pilgrims of Hope, many have made their own journey around the Tokyo churches, and some have gone on a pilgrimage to Rome or Lourdes. Whether we travel near or far, we are all "messengers sent ahead of Jesus" to proclaim his presence among us by our way of speaking and living.

In this new Liturgical Year, Year A, the Gospel of Matthew will take us through Jesus' life from his birth to his death and resurrection. During this Advent season, we will hear bible passages that prepare us for the coming of Christ.

During Advent, we look forward to the coming of Christ at Christmas, just as we look forward to other events like birthdays, graduation, or a ski holiday. And we do many things to prepare for Christmas, like writing Christmas cards, buying gifts, decorating a tree, and maybe setting out a manger scene. These things preoccupy us during December, so we might lose sight of what we should really be preparing for.

Advent reminds us of two things: a past gift and a future promise.

The past gift was the great gift of God coming to live among us because he wanted to be here with us. On Christmas night, we will recall what happened over two thousand years ago. But we need not go back two thousand years to find Jesus. Advent prepares us to be more aware that Jesus is already with us here and now.

Our Advent liturgy reminds us also of a future promise. We look forward to Christmas not only as a memory of a wonderful event in the past. Christmas also promises us an even more glorious future coming of Jesus, not only at the end of the world, whenever that will be, but at the future climax of each person's life, which we prepare for in our present daily life. Thus, the past and the future put the spotlight on the present—so that, as St Paul says, we may "give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark ... and live decently as people do in the daytime."

St Paul urges us to behave now in a way pleasing to God, giving birth to Jesus in ourselves and in our society, letting him use our talents, our heads and our hands to make the world a better place for all—by turning our "swords into plows," taking the wealth used to produce weapons of mass destruction and using it instead to foster basic needs of food for all, clean air and clean water, so that—as the prophet Isaiah says—"nation will not lift sword against nation and there will be no more training for war." We are not truly followers of Jesus if we do not have compassion for real people in their real situations and do not do what we can to help them when they are hungry, thirsty, sick, strangers, or outcasts.

This is how we can "stay awake" so as always to be ready to welcome the Son of Man when he comes quite unexpectedly—not only at the end of our individual life—but here and now in the various challenges of everyday life.

So, once again: Happy Liturgical New Year!

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St. Ignatius Catholic Church
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DID YOU KNOW?

Seating Capacity of the Main Church

(Drafted by the Mission and Pastoral Council of St. Ignatius Church)

To ensure the safety of the faithful during large gatherings, especially for specific Masses, entry restrictions have previously been put in place. This Christmas season, we have established a unified standard for the seating capacity of the Main Church to ensure the well-being of our community and facilitate smooth liturgical celebrations.

1. Emergency Evacuation Capacity: In the event of emergencies (such as earthquakes), safe evacuation can accommodate the following:

- Fixed pews: 700 persons
- Auxiliary chairs: 70 persons
- Liturgical ministers including Altar Servers, Ushers, Choir members: Approximately 20-30 persons
- Additional standing space along the walls (1-2 rows to allow safe movement): approximately 100 persons

This leads to a total capacity for seated attendees of 770 persons. While limiting attendance to seated guests enhances safety, completely prohibiting standing attendance is not feasible, especially for foreign-language Masses.

2. Capacity Reference: The original documentation at the time of the Church's Dedication listed a capacity of 1,100 persons. The proposed figure of 900 persons remains within this limit and does not conflict with any official records or applications.

Masses Likely to Require Capacity Restrictions

Based on previous experience, the following Masses may require entry control:

- Christmas Eve English Mass
- New Year's Day English Mass
- Easter Sunday English Mass
- Church Festival Mass
- Masses presided over by the Bishop

For these Masses, entry will be limited to designated entrances, and physical barriers will be used to manage access once capacity is reached.

Second-Floor Seating

- Due to safety concerns (low railings, risk of falling objects, and potential accidents involving broadcasting equipment), the second floor will not be open to the General Congregation.
- Exceptions may be made for designated individuals (such as the Photography Team).

Courtyard Participation

- For Masses with entry restrictions, outdoor speakers will be used to broadcast the liturgy to those in the courtyard, including the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Future considerations will include installing monitors to display video from inside the Main Church.

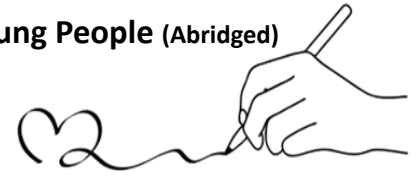


REGULAR CROWD IN THE SUNDAY ENGLISH MASS

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

'Don't let the algorithm write your story,' Pope Leo XIV Exhorts Young People (Abridged)

VATICAN— Pope Leo XIV urged young people to cultivate their “interior life” and to listen to their restlessness without “fleeing from it” or “filling it” with things that don’t satisfy, lest they fall into existential emptiness.



Credits: Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus

“Having a great deal of knowledge is not enough if we do not know who we are or what the meaning of life is,” the Pope told the hundreds of university students he received Oct. 30 in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican for an event held as part of the Jubilee of the World of Education. In his message, he invited the students to rediscover the inner dimension of life and pointed out that “without silence, without listening, without prayer, even the light of the stars goes out.” “We can know a great deal about the world and still ignore our own hearts,” he noted, while encouraging the students to constantly strive “toward the heights,” being “the beacon of hope in the dark hours of history.”

Leo XIV acknowledged that many young people experience a sense of emptiness or inner restlessness and emphasized that this disorientation is not solely due to personal reasons. “In the most serious cases, we see episodes of distress, violence, bullying, and oppression — even young people who isolate themselves and no longer want to relate to others,” the Pope observed. In his view, these deep wounds are “the reflection of “a void created by a society that has forgotten how to form the spiritual dimension of the human person, focusing only on the technical, social, or moral aspects of life.”

The Pope affirmed that a life that remains “stifled by fleeting pleasures will never satisfy us.” Instead, he asked each person to say in his or her heart: “I dream of more, Lord, I long for something greater, inspire me! This desire is your strength and expresses well the commitment of young people who envision a better society and refuse to be mere spectators,” he emphasized after noting that the “desire for the infinite” is the compass they should use. Instead of looking at your phone, look to the sky, to the heights. He urged the university students not to be satisfied “with appearances or fads” and instead of “being fixated on your smartphones, to look to the sky, to the heights.”

“How wonderful it would be if one day your generation were remembered as the ‘generation plus,’ remembered for the extra drive you brought to the Church and the world,” he exclaimed. Pope Leo cited as role models St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, who had “the courage to live life to the fullest” and “to the heights,” and St. Carlo Acutis, “who did not become a slave to the internet but rather used it skillfully for good.” The Pontiff canonized these two young saints together on September 7.

The Pope also cited St. Augustine as an example, describing him as “brilliant but deeply unsatisfied” because he found “neither truth nor peace until he discovered God in his own heart.”



The Holy Father focused much of his address on the challenges posed by the digital world and the development of artificial intelligence, urging that these areas not become “a cage where you lock yourselves in” nor “an addiction or an escape.”

“You live in [digital education] and that’s not a bad thing; there are enormous opportunities for study and communication. But don’t let the algorithm write your story! Be the authors: Use technology wisely, but don’t let technology use you,” he urged.

It is not enough to silence weapons, we must disarm hearts.

Leo XIV emphasized the urgency of a “disarmed and disarming education” that forms new generations in respect, justice, and equality.

“You can see how much our future is threatened by war and hatred, which divide people. Can this future be changed? Certainly! How? With an education for peace that is disarmed and disarming,” the Pope said. Furthermore, he warned that it is not enough to “silence the weapons,” but rather “we must disarm hearts, renouncing all violence and vulgarity.”

As in his recent document on education, “Drawing New Maps of Hope,” Leo XIV called for avoiding all forms of exclusion or privilege in education, “recognizing the equal dignity of every young person, without ever dividing young people between the privileged few who have access to expensive schools and the many who do not have access to education.”

Story by Victoria Cardiel, Catholic News Agency via CBCP News

<https://www.msn.com/en-ph/news/national/don-t-let-the-algorithm-write-your-story-pope-leo-xiv-exhorts-young-people>

ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH NEWS & EVENTS

2025 Church Festival "Together as One"

Fr. Toshiaki Koso, SJ. Brothers and Sisters, congratulations, as we commemorate the Dedication of St. Ignatius Church! We express our gratitude to God for guiding our international community. Let us pray for God's blessings and unity.

HOMILIES (Excerpts)

Fr. Kiyoshi Shibata, SJ. "What does the Church mean to me?" I reflected on this question: Forty years ago, as a second-year university student, I attended morning Mass at Ignatius Church because I was uncertain about my goals in life. After Mass ended, I sat there for a long time when a lady approached me from behind and said, "I hope your wish comes true." It was my first experience at a church, and I realized, "They pray for me." The Church is truly "a place to pray for you." That was my first memorable experience at Ignatian Church.

Fr. Robert Chiesa, SJ. So, where do we locate ourselves within Jesus' parable? **(Luke 18:9-14: The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector).** We come to church and gather with all kinds of people: old and young, rich and poor, polite and perhaps even rude. Do we church-goers avoid or scorn others in our congregation? Do we pick up trash left on the floor without feeling it is below our dignity or blaming someone else for it? Do we show respect and concern for the people in the marketplace who provide us with food, clothing, and other necessities? None of us is completely free of pride; there may be a bit of the Pharisee within each of us. Let's acknowledge that humbly and ask for mercy. At the same time, let us strive to demonstrate the mercy and compassion of Jesus in the way we pray and interact with others in church and in our communities.

Fr. Nguyen Thanh Nha, SJ. On this occasion, I would like to reaffirm the nature of a Catholic church. As Fr. Shibata just shared his experience before converting to Catholicism, the church, first and foremost, is a place to pray. We come here to pray for ourselves and for others. Secondly, the church is a place to help one another. We are invited to show God's mercy to those who are suffering around us. We must not act like the Pharisee in today's gospel, who judges another person to boast about himself. The church is a space for all of us to be humble before God, asking for His mercy and holding one another's hands as we journey toward God's kingdom.

Fr. Javier Garralda, SJ We are an international community. We are separated by language but united because we belong to the same Church and share the same faith. However, that union is not enough. To be truly united, Jesus Christ must be at the center of our lives, helping those in need, bringing joy, and giving generously. I encourage everyone to live like Christ and with Christ. That is how we will truly unite.



MASS CELEBRANTS



CULTURAL PRESENTATION OF THE SPANISH GROUP



SHARING OF YOUTH PILGRIMS TO ROME



VIETNAMESE FOOD STALL



LIVING ROSARY WITH MYANMAR GROUP LEADING A MYSTERY

OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS @ A GLANCE (OCTOBER-NOVEMBER)

October 18. Mass in Celebration of Longevity and gathering for the Elderly after the Mass.



Fr Ochoa leading the kampaï!

October 31. First Translators' Gathering

To those responsible for translation tasks at St. Ignatius Church, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support of the Church's multilingual initiatives. Your dedicated service allows many individuals to engage with the Gospel beyond language barriers, connecting them to the larger community. Thank you for your generosity and passion. (Ikumi Chiara)



Translators of the Japanese, English, Spanish and Vietnamese Groups

November 2. All Soul's Day Mass / Halloween Event: All Saints' Day Mass of the English Sunday School. Now in its third year, we are fostering a counter-culture where children no longer feel the need to pretend to be hideous monsters. Instead, they are inspired to become real-life heroes, emulating individuals who truly walked the earth. (Mae Grace Harashima)



Children dressed as Saints during the Halloween Mass in honor of All Saints

November 16. The 1st Sunday School Teens' Group Joint Activity with the Franciscan Chapel Center Youth in Roppongi. On November 16, the English Sunday School Teens held a joint activity with the youth of the Franciscan Center Chapel in Roppongi for the first time. A total of 34 participants, including 22 from St. Ignatius. It was a wonderful experience and a great blessing. Working with the FCC team was great. While we share the same passion, we have different approaches and methods, which have enriched our perspectives.

The teens had a fantastic time filled with games, dancing, and sharing. The discussions were engaging, and there was a lot of worship time. This event showcased the beauty of the Church to these young people, and the joy they felt was deep. (Isabelle Bonasse, NDV)



Group Activity with FCC Youth

November 9. Japanese Mass with Children Blessing (Shichi-Go-San Blessing Ceremony)



Blessing the children with Fr. Shibata is our newly-ordained Jesuit Priest, Fr. Yamauchi Yutaka

OTHER ACTIVITIES

November 16. Parents Formation Series: Influence of Social Media on Children and Teens, and Tips on What Parents Can Do
Facilitator: Sr. Flor Florece, FI

November 22.
Japanese Community Retreat
Title: Becoming One as God's People
Speaker: Fr. Nguyen Thanh Nha, SJ

November 22-24
SIYM Retreat: Pilgrims of Hope -
Going into the Deep
Facilitator: Sr. Lorena Seville, FI

All these show how vibrant
St. Ignatius Church is!
May we continue to be
"TOGETHER AS ONE!"

SPECIAL FEATURE

HOPE THAT TRANSFORMS

by Sr. Flor Florece, F.I.

October 30. I went to the Tokyo Cathedral in Mejiro to do the Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage. My 9th. And alone. How refreshing it was! A break from the fast-paced grind of my mission in St. Ignatius. Not leading a large number of pilgrims. I had the cavernous church all to myself. I was immediately enveloped in stillness and drawn to prayer.

Only a month is left, and the Jubilee Year of Hope initiated by Pope Francis is about to come to an end. What has happened to me, to us, to the Catholic faithful all over the world, in our “journey of hope”? I remembered what the Pope wrote to Cardinal Rino Fisichella as they were organizing the event, which takes place only every 25 years. “We must ignite the flame of hope within us and help everyone to look to the future with openness, trust, and vision that reaches beyond today.”



It is good to look back. It is not a question of how many pilgrimage churches we have visited, of satisfying our curiosity about what this church looks like, of glancing at the exhibits prepared, or of putting as many stamps in the souvenir booklet. It is asking oneself, **how has the experience of the pilgrimage transformed my heart?** Has it drawn me closer to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Holy Eucharist, and performed works of Mercy (Corporal and Spiritual)? Has the flame of hope been truly ignited in me? Have I shared the flame of hope with others, whose “wick” is hardly burning? You have been praying for many souls in Purgatory, but how about your soul?

As “Pilgrims of Hope”, the pilgrimage is “an act of penance and conversion, an expression of our desire to be reconciled to God and be bearers of hope to others”. As expressed in the **Jubilee Year Prayer** itself, “May grace **transform** us...” The **Jubilee Song**, translated into many languages, sung at many Masses, is beautiful. What particular line or verse keeps tugging at your heart? Have you picked it up and brought it into your conversations with God, in silence and simplicity of heart? What is His invitation?

A Hope that Transforms. Internal knowledge of so much good received in this Jubilee Year. What am I grateful for? What words express and summarize the experiences I have lived? It requires going “into the deep”.

That day, I used our Congregation's document (Welcoming the Determination of GCXIX, Hijas de Jesus) as material for prayer, to launch “into the deep”. I would like to share with you some points that have helped me “go into the deep”.

“Connecting with hope that transforms not only has a future dimension, but also one of recovery from the past. Remembering how God has led us (Deut. 8) is a guarantee that He will continue to do so in His own way and that he goes before us every step of the way (Ex 13:21-22).”

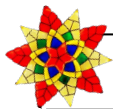
“There is no hope without memory in the heart.” Who were the people you knew or have met this year who have shown they have given their best, who trusted and took risks in difficult times, and have taught us we can become companions of hope in times of loss, crisis, or calamities?

“The hope that transforms is hidden in small gestures. God is hidden in the details. Small gestures are the humble traces of hope that humanize relationships. Reaching out our hands, blessing with our words, offering them as bonds of acceptance and affection...”

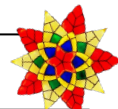


“The hope that transforms is that which suggests gestures that humanize life. To be able to offer our bread and “perfume” to others. Giving thanks together, celebrating the Eucharist in a world wounded and hungry for love. Where there is care and interdependence, there is hope”.

The Catholic Church's Jubilee Year 2025 will officially conclude in Tokyo's Archdiocese with the closing of the Holy Doors in local churches on December 28, 2025. The global Jubilee Year will then formally end in Rome on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, January 6, 2026. Only a month is left. Perhaps there is still time to go on another pilgrimage to synthesize your experience? AND come to think about it. Does our pilgrimage of HOPE really end?



IMPORTANT NOTICES



Schedule of Masses & Confessions

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 st Sunday: 12:30 PM (Portuguese)	4:00 PM (Polish)
2 nd and 4 th Sunday: 4:30 PM (Indonesian)	

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 – 14:00

Staff of St. Ignatius Church

Pastor: Fr. Toshiaki Koso S.J.

Associate and Support Priest:

Fr. Saturnino Ochoa S.J.	Fr. Kiyoshi Shibata S.J.
Fr. Bony James S.J.	Fr. Manuel Silgo S.J.
Fr. Nguyễn Thanh Nha S.J.	Fr. Javier Garralda S.J.
Fr. Nguyễn Van The S.J.	Fr. Etsuo Sekine S.J.
Fr. Jerry Cusumano S.J.	Sch. Antonio Soares S.J.

Centro Loyola:

Sr. Marcela Rosas M.C.

Vietnamese Center:

Sr. Rosanna Ngoc Tuyen
D.H.M

John de Britto English Center:

Fr. Bony James S.J.	Director
Sr. Flor Florece F.I.	Coordinator
Jessie Buendia NdV	Coordinator

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS

December 2025 - For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

January 2026 – For Prayer with the Word of God

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.

CHURCH WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGE



PARISH MASS INTENTIONS

ADVENT – 21st DECEMBER (Sunday)

- Advent is a time to await the Lord's grace. May each of us, bearing the grace we desire, quietly prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus.

24th and 25th of DECEMBER 2025:

- May we share the joy and hope of the Lord's Nativity with those close to us through everyday words and deeds.

HOLY FAMILY – 28th DECEMBER

- We give thanks for being able to spend this year with our families. May we continue to relate to those around us, taking the Holy Family gathered around the infant Jesus as our model, in both joyful and difficult times.

1st JANUARY to the 25th, 2026

- We pray as we welcome the New Year. May we, who have received many blessings as 'pilgrims of hope', continue to walk with a grateful heart, holding onto the hope that lies ahead even when facing hardship.



**ADVENT
GREETINGS**

*from John de
Britto English
Center*

Thank you!

To all those who made this
bi-monthly Bulletin possible, our
deepest gratitude and appreciation.
God bless!!!

WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR SCHEDULE



DECEMBER 2025



December 14 (Sunday) - JdBEC CHRISTMAS PARTY (Volunteers, SIIYM, Sunday School)

Venue: St. Joseph Hall
Time: 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM



December 24 @ 9:00PM - CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

Venues: Main Church - 900 persons only
St. Joseph Hall - 300 persons
(live-streamed with chairs)
Our Lady's Chapel - 200 persons
(live-streamed with chairs)
Church Lawn (live-streamed, no chairs)



- * Will use ticket stubs to enter
- * Start of entrance to the Church: 8:15/8:20 PM

**SIIYM CHRISTMAS CAROLING will be after
5:00PM, 7:00PM and 9:00PM Masses.**

December 25 (Thursday) - CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

Venues: Main Church - 900 persons only
St. Joseph Hall - 300 persons
(live-streamed with chairs)
Our Lady's Chapel - 200 persons
(live-streamed with chairs)
In front of the Church - no screen,
with speakers



*** SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS
CAROLING - after 12:00PM Mass.**

December 31 (Wednesday) YEAR-END RETREAT

Venue: Xavier Chapel
Time: 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



JANUARY 2026



January 1 (Thursday) - SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



- * Masses are the same as the
Sunday schedule
- * English Mass is at 12:00 PM

January 11 (Sunday)
PARISH NEW YEAR'S PARTY
@ 1:00PM St. Joseph's Hall



January 4 (Sunday)
CLOSING of the
JUBILEE
YEAR



*during the 12 p.m.
English Mass

January 18 (Sunday) - SANTO NIÑO MASS



- *At the 12 p.m. English Mass
- *Venue for Sinulog dance and
prayer: At Kibe Hall Open Space