



"May the joy of Christmas sustain our journey!"

by Sr. Flor Florece, F.I.

Welcome, readers, to our 2026 January-February Bulletin!



After the Christmas season, we enter Ordinary Time, which is a period outside the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. During Ordinary Time, we reflect on various mysteries of Christ that are not specifically commemorated by these seasons. This time serves as an invitation from Mother Church to deepen our knowledge, love, and commitment to Christ. As this issue is released on February 1, we note that the Lenten season will soon begin, starting with Ash Wednesday on February 18.

In this issue, we would like to share excerpts from the message delivered by Pope Leo XIV during the Angelus on the Second Sunday of Christmas at the Vatican. Although it was published in Vatican News on January 4, we hope this message serves as an inspiration as we navigate the year 2026 and continue our faith journey throughout the liturgical year, both as a community and as individuals.

Excerpts from Pope Leo XIV

May the joy of Christmas inspire us to continue on our journey. "The mystery of Christmas reminds us that the foundation of our hope is God's Incarnation. As Scripture says, 'The Word became flesh and lived among us' (John 1:14). He shared the vulnerability of human flesh. In Jesus, God became one of us, chose to stay with us, and willed to be forever God-with-us. Our Christian hope, therefore, is not based on optimistic forecasts or human calculations, but on God's decision to share our journey so that we are never alone as we travel through life."

Examining our spirituality and expressions of faith. "Therefore," he urged, "we must continually examine our spirituality and the ways we express our faith to ensure they are genuinely embodied." He emphasized that this requires us to contemplate, proclaim, and pray to the God "who meets us in Jesus." "He is not a distant deity residing in a perfect heaven above," the Pope said, "but a God who is close to us, inhabiting our fragile earth. He becomes present in the faces of our brothers and sisters and reveals himself in the circumstances of our daily lives."

Authentic worship of God requires care for humanity. The Holy Father said that our commitment to all men and women must be consistent. He reminded us that "since God has become one of us, every human being reflects him, bearing his image and containing a spark of his light." He emphasized that this recognition calls us to honor the inviolable dignity of every person and to offer ourselves in mutual love for one another. The Pope added that this commitment, "demands a concrete effort to promote fraternity and communion," enabling solidarity to become the guiding principle of all human relationships. "There is no authentic worship of God without care for humanity."

In conclusion, Pope Leo prayed that the joy of Christmas encourage us to continue on our journey and that we ask the Virgin Mary to make us ever more ready to serve both God and our neighbor.

(Culled from an article by Deborah Castellano Lubov
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2026-01/pope-at-angelus-4-january-2026>)

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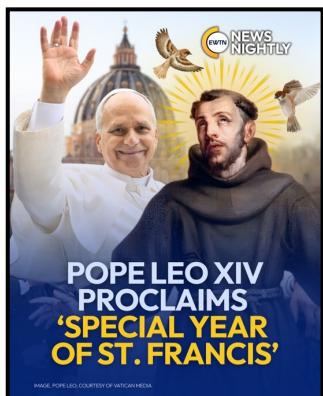
DID YOU KNOW?

News from the VATICAN

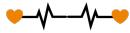
* On January 6, 2026, the Feast of the Epiphany, Pope Leo XIV closed the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica, concluding the Jubilee Year of Hope. Nearly 33.5 million pilgrims visited Rome during the Holy Year, representing 185 countries. Pilgrims are encouraged to return for the next extraordinary Jubilee in 2033.



* Pope Leo XIV has declared a Franciscan Jubilee Year to celebrate the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's death. The inauguration ceremony was held at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi, Italy, and the Jubilee will last until January 2027.



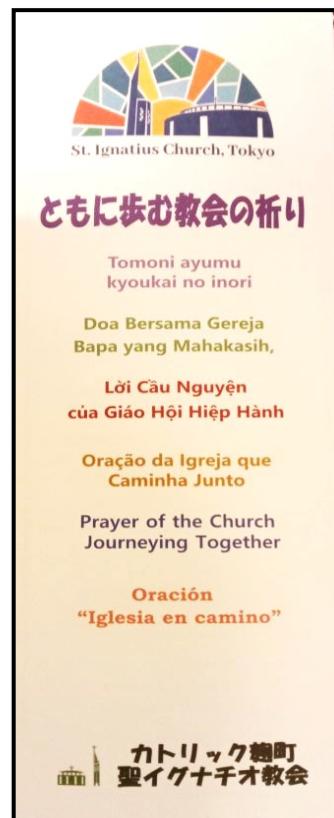
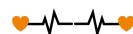
This Jubilee encourages the faithful to follow St. Francis in holiness, peace, and charity. A plenary indulgence is available by visiting a Franciscan church and fulfilling the usual conditions: sacramental confession, Holy Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions.



* Pope Leo began 2026 with a call to return to the source of our hope: the Word of God. In his January address, he said, "This month I am praying for you. Yes, for you. I am also praying for myself and for the entire Church. May we learn to practice and love praying with the Word of God. The gift of Scripture is God's love letter to humanity. Let us pray that we all draw from this gift and deepen our relationship with our Lord. Are you ready? Please join me and share this message with others." (PRAY WITH THE POPE, popesprayer.va)

News from St. Ignatius Church

* The Church Theme for this year is: "Let Us Become One in Christ - Toward a Synodal Church." This theme reflects the multilingual and multicultural nature of our parish, emphasizing unity that transcends national and generational boundaries. The phrase "In Christ" encourages us to serve according to Jesus' desires rather than our personal preferences, while "Toward a Synodal Church" highlights an active and intentional movement towards collaboration. This theme will be featured in events such as the Church Festival and the Annual Activity Report Meeting, and it will be adopted for the next five years.



* Have you received a copy of the

Prayer of the Church Journeying Together?

This year, all language groups are encouraged to incorporate this prayer into their Sunday Masses.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

To prevent overcrowding and ensure the safety of our Massgoers, starting Saturday, February 21st, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., an additional English Anticipated Mass will be held in St. Mary's Chapel.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

"Onward! Forward!: From Pilgrims to Missionaries"

The image before us tells a quiet yet powerful story. A diverse group of people walks together, led by Christ, who carries the Cross not as a burden, but as a standard that shows the way. Beneath their feet lies the passage of time, transitioning from 2025 to 2026, symbolizing a shift from grace received to grace given.

The Jubilee Year of Hope was not intended to be just a memory; it was meant to inspire us to move forward. The Church does not exist only for inward journeys as pilgrims; it exists to be sent outward as missionaries. As Pope Francis reminds us, "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus." Missionary discipleship does not begin in distant lands; it starts right where God has placed you.

From Pilgrims to Missionaries

A pilgrim walks to receive, while a missionary walks to give. During the Jubilee Year, we passed through holy doors in search of mercy, healing, and hope. In 2026, Christ will journey alongside us, inviting us to share what we have received with the world. You don't need a passport to be a missionary; what you need is availability, fidelity, and a visibly lived love. Your mission field has already been assigned to you.



Your Sphere of Influence Is Your Mission Field: Practical Ways to Be a Missionary

Family: God has entrusted you with specific souls—people you alone can reach. The family is the first place where the Gospel should be demonstrated, not just spoken. Pray openly: before meals, before traveling, and before making decisions. Speak of God's mercy aloud: forgive quickly and apologize humbly. Establish small holy habits, such as a weekly Rosary decade, Scripture reading, or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Teach by example; patience, chastity, faithfulness, and charity speak louder than words. Missionary families cultivate missionary hearts.

Workplace or School: Be a witness without a pulpit. While you may not be able to preach, you can radiate positivity. Work with integrity, even when it comes at a cost. Refuse to participate in gossip; instead, choose to speak blessings. Be a calm presence during conflicts, and let others know that you pray quietly, respectfully, and sincerely. Offer to pray for others when they share their struggles. Your holiness at work can serve as a signpost pointing to Christ.

Friendships: Evangelization Through Relationship. Most people come to Christ not through arguments, but through trust. Listen carefully before responding. Share simply and honestly how God has worked in your life. Invite people to Mass, Adoration, retreats, or novenas, but never force them. Patiently support others as they navigate their doubts and wounds. Missionaries don't rush conversions; they cultivate hearts.

Digital World: A New Mission Territory. Your online presence is not neutral; it either testifies to truth or remains silent. Share Scripture, reflections, or prayers. Avoid divisive or unkind speech. Defend the truth with gentleness. Use beauty—such as art, images, and testimonies—to point towards God. Even a single post can be a seed of grace.

Missionaries Move Forward Together. In the image, we see that no one walks alone. Christ leads while the people follow together. Mission is not a solo endeavor; it is ecclesial and communal, sustained by prayer and the sacraments. Stay close to the Eucharist, which is the source of missionary strength; to Confession, the wellspring of mercy; to Mary, the first and perfect missionary; and to the Cross, our compass and our hope.

Onward. Forward. The World Awaits. The Jubilee doors have closed, but the mission doors are opening. The year 2026 is not a retreat from grace; it is a response to it. Christ leads the way before you, and the Cross shows the path. The world is waiting for hope to be made visible. Instead of asking, "Am I called to be a missionary?" ask, "To whom am I sent today?"

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/PrayersOfTheFaithful>; abridged)

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL – School of Mary's Heart is a lay Catholic apostolate dedicated to online evangelization and catechesis, serving both non-Catholics seeking the truth and Catholics desiring deeper formation in faith.)

ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH NEWS & EVENTS

This is how we began Year 2026...



Mass: Solemnity of the Epiphany and Closing of the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Three kings came (from Myanmar, offering the logo; Ghana offering the star of Bethlehem; India offering sandals as a sign of journeying



New Year's Party (Shinnenkai) vibes with Fr. Koso and other Jesuits



Dismantling of the manger outside the Church



Coming of Age Day of twenty-three young Japanese and from other nationalities

Santo Niño Mass and Sinulog Dance



Procession of Santo Niño images during the 12 noon Mass and Sinulog Dancers

ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH NEWS & EVENTS

Memories of Christmas 2025...



Carol at Yotsuya station

Christmas manger made by the Vietnamese Group

Christmas Eve Caroling by the SIIYM and Japanese Youth Groups



Japanese children with Santa Claus



Christmas Eve Candle Service

Christmas skit by Sunday School Teens

SIIYM RETREAT

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles.” — Isaiah 40:31

The long-awaited moment finally arrived—the SIIYM 2025 Annual Retreat! This year, we spent three beautiful days in Hadano, Kanagawa, surrounded by nature and far from the busyness of everyday life. It was a time of prayer, gratitude, and deep reflection. Through our sharing sessions, each of us discovered new insights and fresh perspectives.

One question that resonated during our discussions was: “Which season are we in right now in our lives?” As we reflected, we realized that while we all long for spring—a season of renewal and joy—getting there can be challenging.



Year-end English Retreat with Fr. George, SJ



Our Jubilee Year logo beautifully illustrates this journey: four people holding onto each other, with the person in front grasping the cross. Though each stands at different levels, they remain connected to the cross through one another. We may find ourselves at the front, in the middle, or even at the far back—but as long as we hold onto each other, we carry the hope that the spring we await will surely come.

This retreat reminded us that Jesus Himself faced struggles, yet He held onto hope—and ultimately became Hope for the whole world. In the same way, if we persevere through our challenges today, we may become that hope for someone else who is struggling. And so, the cycle continues, because as Scripture promises:

“Hope does not disappoint.” — Romans 5:5

(Aleena Elizabeth)

SPECIAL FEATURE

“FROM OUR EYES”

(The John de Britto English Center offers classes for individuals interested in learning about the Catholic Church and considering conversion to the faith. This program is known as the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA). During the Christmas season, participants were encouraged to attend various church events to gain exposure to the community. Four catechumens were asked to write about their experiences. In this Special Feature, you can gain insight into how they perceived our celebrations.)

End of the Year Retreat with Fr. George Nikhil, SJ

People asked, “What is this Year-End Retreat?” and questioned its purpose, wondering if it was better to spend the holidays with family. These questions showed curiosity and a lack of understanding, which was fine! They offered a chance to explain and invite them to experience it themselves.

Learning about the Jesuit way of prayer and minimizing distractions—even if just for a few hours—has been incredibly fulfilling. It allowed me to avoid wasting time doomscrolling on social media, to communicate with others, and to share our life experiences. The sharing brought us together. I found myself part of a much bigger “family” than I could ever have imagined, and most importantly, I felt a deep connection with our amazing Father and best friend.

If I hadn’t gone, I wouldn’t have met JFK and Neil, who answered my questions and provided loving guidance that made me feel less lost and more welcome. Most importantly, I became much closer to Jesus. Honestly, the retreat was a blessing I never expected to receive. (Male, Greek)

December 24 Japanese Mass (3 pm.)

What made the experience even more special was that I brought one of my family members with me. She is non-Catholic and does not practice any religion, but since I am planning to get baptized, I wanted her to experience a church service before that. It was her first visit, and I was worried about how she would react. Unlike the usual Masses, the church was uniquely decorated, which caught her attention. Fortunately, she really liked the decorations, the atmosphere, and the Mass itself.

She especially appreciated the blessings people receive during the service. She mentioned that no one in her daily life ever tells her, “May you be blessed.” I realized that we often take for granted phrases like “I am praying for you” or “May good things happen to you” that we hear within our church community. Receiving blessings and the Eucharist, not only on Christmas but also during our daily Masses, is truly a privilege. Looking back, I recognize that I did not have such experiences before coming to church. Even my family members, who do not have a Catholic background, have noticed this.

Reflecting on my special experience, I realize how blessed we are to know the church and to receive blessings and the Eucharist every Sunday. Although I am not yet baptized, I hope to be baptized very soon, and I am excited about having my First Communion. Thank you, St. Ignatius Church, for this precious experience! (Female, Japanese)

Christmas Eve Mass (9:00 p.m. English)

The Christmas season in 2025 was my first experience as a catechumen. In 2023, I attended Christmas Mass in New York City, but my heart had not yet embraced the Catholic faith. In contrast, in 2025, I participated in Christmas Mass at St. Ignatius Church with a truly Catholic heart. With a deeper understanding of the meaning of Christmas, the experience was beautiful.

During the Mass and in my personal prayers, God reminded me of the Annunciation. I reflected on Mary’s “yes” to God and her trust in his plan. I was also drawn to the Nativity scene, where Mary quietly pondered in her heart. Mary has been a significant figure in my journey toward the Catholic faith since childhood, and these moments during Mass warmed my heart profoundly.

There was another important reason why Christmas Mass at St. Ignatius was so beautiful: it provided an opportunity to reflect on love itself. Christmas is not only about gifts and festive lights; it is also about offering our time, effort, and love to others. Keeping this in my heart allowed me to express my love for Christ by attending Mass. I was also able to share this love by spending meaningful time with my family, friends, and even people I had just met.

Connecting with others, forming community, and building relationships is truly beautiful. In our daily lives, we often focus too much on ourselves and our achievements, which can lead to broken relationships and deeper social challenges. Through my experience of Christmas in 2025, I learned a deeper way of loving others and intentionally fostering love. (Female, Japanese)

Volunteer Work

On Christmas Eve, I stood outside to help with the massive foot traffic for the English Mass. It was chaotic with over a thousand people, but instead of feeling like it was hard labor, it felt electric, seeing so many souls hungry for a Christmas service. The highlight was having my daughter standing right by my side, directing people and serving the Church. Standing there in the cold with her, I realized that passing on the faith isn’t just about lectures, it’s about serving. We were just small branches of the vine (John 15:5) that night, helping the sap flow to the rest of the body.

The vibe was totally different when I went back on January 11th to help take down the Nativity display. The crowds were gone, and it was just a quiet crew packing away the statues and cleaning up. Putting the Holy Family and the wise men into boxes felt a little melancholy, like we were packing away the magic of the Incarnation. (Male, Nigerian)

John de Britto English Center



We need

Volunteers

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours." — Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Groups & Ministries

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Composed of multicultural children. Classes are divided into Primary, Intermediate, and Teen levels. Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, from 1:30-2:30 p.m., to learn about the basics of the Catholic faith.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP GROUP

Held every 1st Sunday of the month in Arrupe Hall Rm. 203B, 10:00-11:30 AM. Gathers to praise the Lord through songs, give thanks, and listen attentively to his life-giving Word. Personal intentions are received to be offered up in prayer

INTERNATIONAL GROUP MEETING

Held every 2nd 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.

FAITH FORMATION GROUP FOR ADULTS

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.

YOUTH MINISTRY

An international group that leads the Youth Mass every 4th 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), Language Café (4th Sunday). Meet them in Room 103.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC)

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.

ALTAR SERVERS

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.

ANGELS GROUP

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.

CHOIR

Sings at the 12 noon Sunday English Mass. Practices in Room 401 11:00a.m.

SUNDAY READINGS FAITH SHARING

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!

READERS' GROUP

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.

MEDIA

Prepares the Sunday Mass power point, the bi-monthly English Bulletin, makes special posters, and takes care of the English website and Facebook Page of St. Ignatius Church.

WEEKDAY OFFICE STAFF

They open the English Center on weekdays, from 10:00-3:00 PM to attend to the needs of those who come or call for inquiries.

USHERS

Every Sunday, during the 12nn English Mass, they facilitate an orderly and prayerful atmosphere before, during, and after mass..

COFFEE WELCOME MINISTRY

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."



SACRAMENTS: schedule & classes

INFANT/ ADULT BAPTISM:

Schedule: 3rd Sunday of Feb, April, June, September & November

Venue: St Marry's Chapel

Time: 10:00 AM

Classes: to be arranged with the coordinator in-charge

MARRIAGE PREPARATION:

Inquire at least 4 months before the wedding day.

John de Britto English Center

Address: 6-5-1 Kojimachi, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 102-0083

Office Hours:

Weekdays 10:00 - 12:00
13:00 - 15:00

Weekends 10:00 - 17:00

Telephone: 03 - 3263 - 4576

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)	

CONFESION

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. 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.	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

February 2026 - For children with incurable diseases

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

March - For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

CHURCH WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGE



PARISH MASS INTENTIONS

February

1 – JdBEC Anniversary Mass

18 - Ash Wednesday

21 - Opening of 2nd English Mass
(Anticipated Mass, Saturday, 5:30 p.m., Our Lady's Chapel)

22- 1st Sunday of Lent

March

1 - 2nd Sunday of Lent

29 - Palm Sunday; Beginning of Holy Week

April

5 – Easter Sunday

Thank you

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