

# ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Ignatius Church, Tokyo  
Celebrating 25 years

October - November 2023

BI-MONTHLY ENGLISH BULLETIN

## Let's Walk Together - Toward the 25th Anniversary and Beyond

By Jun Iwasaki

This was the theme of this year's Church Festival held October 8. For the International Mass, the Main Church, St. Joseph's Hall, and Our Lady's Chapel were full to capacity, and many people attended the Mass on the church lawn. One of the goals of this Church Festival was to celebrate "Back to Church" after COVID-19, a phrase that Fr. Saturnino Ochoa SJ, our former pastor, has been saying all along. Last year's Church Festival (2022) had a Mass with a limited number of people and only one event. This year the Mass was overflowing with people, and we were able to enjoy a wide variety of events.

The theme consists of three elements: "**Walk Together**," "**Toward the 25th Anniversary**," and "**Beyond**". "Walk Together" pertains to the spirit of the Synod. "Toward the 25th Anniversary" refers to the beginning of the dedication of the present church 25 years ago. Beginning from the launching on October 8,



*Present Church in its initial years*

the coming months until October 13, 2024 are part of the year's celebration. "Beyond" has various meanings. One example is going "beyond language barriers", one of the key issues in order to deepen the connection among the various communities within the parish.

Building on experiences obtained through the preparations and organization of the festival, we would like to make the commemorative events for the 25th anniversary even better. One particular area that we want to focus on is **to strengthen the unity** among the various communities in the parish. We have created an International Team under the umbrella of the 25th Anniversary Committee to work with each community from the early stages of the project and hope that the commemorative events will be joyful for everyone.

Another aim is to go beyond our own boundaries by concretizing "Mission 2030". As Fr. Koso mentioned in his homily at the International Mass, our aim is "to proceed toward Mission 2030 with structural and qualitative conversion in our way of doing and thinking," which is defined as Prayer, Communication, Connection, and Walking Together while 'our home, the earth' is undergoing significant changes." And, in order to keep up with changes happening in the outside world, it is important we should stay not only inside the church, but go out beyond its walls.

I am part of the Parish Council of St. Ignatius Church, and the one named to be In-Charge of this year's Church Festival. Before that, I was a member of "Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama,"

one of the Activity groups in the church. The purpose of the latter is to help the homeless and others who lack even minimal food and housing, and we visit these people every Saturday bringing onigiri (rice balls). Since this was the main activity I was involved in, I had not spent much time within the church. However, when I became a Councilor last April, my church life changed drastically, and since then I have been spending many hours in the church on weekends.

The work of a Lay Councilor, together with the priests and religious, is "to cooperate, according to their roles, discuss and jointly discern and decide the basic policy of what the parish should be and what it should accomplish" in order to build up the church community and to promote the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. It is overwhelming, but I am trying to do my part. The words of Fr. Henri Nouwen have inspired me a lot: "**You do not need to know the big steps to take the little steps. You only have to take one step at a time. ... Jesus does not ask us to jump. He asks us first to move, very, very carefully, step by step by step. The first step is to listen. The second is to step away from 'mine'.**"

When I started activities as a member of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama and became a Councilor, it was not because I wanted to, but because I followed what I was called to do. I did not know then what it entailed, and even now I am still not sure, but I feel the Holy Spirit's guidance. I hope to be attentive to his call, so that I can go beyond myself and out into a new world.



that the winning entry of the LOGO Competition was made by Joanne Lopes from India? She is a young Montessori teacher who came to Japan only last July. Providentially, on the very first time she attended Sunday Mass at St. Ignatius, the Logo-making Competition was announced. When later interviewed about what inspired her to create the design, Joanne said that when she arrived in Japan, she saw how completely different Japan and India are from each other. She could not find anything in common between these two countries. But she thought, "God and the Catholic Church are the same everywhere." And this is what moved her to create the logo for the 25th anniversary of St. Ignatius Church.



Here is the winning entry, and its inspiring message:

**"When I think of St. Ignatius Church, the word that resonates most with me is "Shelter." Arriving in a new country can often be a lonely experience, but within the walls of the church, I found not only a spiritual refuge but a community that welcomed**

**me with open arms.**

The magnificent stained glass windows were the first things to captivate my attention when I first stepped into the church... They are a symbol of the church's beauty and the light it brings into our lives. Therefore, I envisioned the foundation of our logo to be inspired by stained glass, representing the colorful and diverse tapestry of our congregation.

The image of a rising sun is a homage to Tokyo and in the foreground, standing prominently, are the two iconic buildings that grace our church premises, symbolizing the very heart and soul of our cherished community."

St. Ignatius Church Duplex printing

Logo for the 25th Anniversary of Main Chapel - Application Form

Symbolic Logo



**Message to the Logo**

When I think of St. Ignatius Church, the word that resonates most with me is 'Shelter.' Arriving in a new country can often be a lonely experience, but within the walls of the church, I found not only a spiritual refuge but a community that welcomed me with open arms.

The magnificent stained glass windows were the first things to captivate my attention when I first stepped into the church a few weeks ago. They are a symbol of the church's beauty and the light it brings into our lives. Therefore, I envisioned the foundation of our logo to be inspired by stained glass, representing the colorful and diverse tapestry of our congregation.

The image of a rising sun is an homage to Tokyo and in the foreground, standing prominently, are the two iconic buildings that grace our church premises, symbolizing the very heart and soul of our cherished community.

Do not write anything below this.

Deadline: Sunday, September 10, 2023



how many people go to St. Ignatius on Sundays now that we are already in post-pandemic times? Below, we share with you the results of the census conducted by the parish on September 24, 30 and October 1, 2023.

**TOTAL No. of Mass-goers:** 3,057. Of this number, 1,116 were men and 1,941, were women, meaning that there are more women that come to St. Ignatius than men. There were 2,347 that received Communion, 323 a Blessing and 387 that received neither Communion nor Blessing, which indicates active reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

**TOTAL No. of Mass-goers in the Japanese Mass:** 1,259. **In other languages:** 1,798. These statistics show that there are more foreigners going to Mass than Japanese. Among the language groups, the highest attendance is 764 at the 12 noon English Mass, followed by

the Vietnamese with almost the same number, 752. The attendance at the Spanish Mass is 100, at the Indonesian Mass 66, at the Polish Mass 64, and at the Portuguese Mass 52.





## HALLOWEEN FEVER



As early as September, 100-yen shops have already prominently displayed their Halloween wares- costumes, masks, accompanying props of scary creatures. Next, the Mayor of Shibuya City released a directive addressing young people, "Do not gather in Shibuya Crossing on the last weekend of October!" Shibuya is well known for rowdy crowds. Indeed, Halloween has become very popular in Tokyo. Social media and commercialism have made it so.

As Church, can we do something so that young minds and hearts get to understand that Halloween is linked to the Catholic Church? That the word "hallows" is just an old English way of saying "holy" for "saints"? Thus, All Saints Day was called "All Hallows Day" (November 1) and the night before came to be called "All Hallows Eve" (October 31) (Halloween)?

On October 29, a "Halloween Mass for Children" was celebrated in the 12 noon English Mass. The name probably raised eyebrows of some parents and adults. Well, during the Mass, no scary ghosts or pumpkins appeared. Children in cosplay costumes marched to the tune of "And when the Saints, Came Marching In". It was actually an **"ALL SAINTS' DAY MASS"** celebrated by Fr. Bony James, SJ and Fr. Iriniel Dobos, Franciscan Conventual. They explained to the children (and adults as well) the origin of Halloween and how it is linked to All Saints' Day. And before the end of the Mass all children were blessed.

Third Sunday of October, the topic of the Sunday School class was on "SAINTS". Our Catechists with much zeal and creativity talked about who are. Are they real? They were also asked who they know. Why did they become saints? Those baptized in Japan were asked if they know their Christian names (reimei), only to find out that most of them were named after saints. They were encouraged to look for more information about them or ask their parents why they chose that name for them.

It was the first time in St. Ignatius that an "All Saints Mass for Children" was held. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Patron Saint of our Church, once said, "use, every method, every opportunity" to bring people to God. The Halloween event, held October 29, was one! It was to help our young generation to journey towards God. **So, who says Halloween is not a cool Christian celebration?**



## October Living Rosary

St. Ignatius Church holds a "LIVING ROSARY" twice a year. It is usually participated by the different language groups of all ages. This year's theme was **"TAKE CARE OF MY LAMBS!"**

Do you remember John 21: 15-17? It is that that beautiful, tender scene when Jesus and Simon Peter were engaged in an intimate conversation and Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" Peter answered, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you". Then Jesus said, "Take care of **my lambs!**"

In Luke 1: 26-38 (Annunciation of the Birth of our Lord), God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary. He said, "The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you...you will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus...he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High... And Mary said, "I am the Servant of the Lord. May it happen to me as you said."



Peter, whom Christ bestowed the leadership of the Church was told to take care of **his lambs**. Mary was asked to be the mother of the Son of God. Both were given a task – to "TAKE CARE OF MY LAMBS". Jesus was the "LAMB of God". God's desire, "Take care of my lambs" might as well be addressed to us, said Sr. Flor Florece, FI. as she explained the theme of the Living Rosary held October 29.

Many gathered in the church lawn- Church members of different ages, language groups. They joined because they have great devotion to the rosary. Parents and catechists came to guide and support the children praying the rosary. It was the first time that the children of different ages, belonging to the Japanese, Vietnamese, English-speaking Sunday Schools, individually recited the "Hail Mary" in the language they were most comfortable with. It was the first time, young parents, carrying babies or with toddlers prayed together one bead of the rosary. It was a beautiful experience of John 21 and Luke 1 being put to life!

Parents, as they ask for the Sacrament of Baptism promise to "pass on the faith" to their children. What a beautiful way to do it through the ROSARY! The children may not entirely understand what they did, what they prayed, but we, the adults are "depositing" the faith in their minds and hearts through this very Catholic devotion. Hopefully, they will remember when they become grown-up ( "tanoshiikatta) experiences like this and develop deep love for our Blessed Mother!

# ST. IGNATIUS NEWS AND CHURCH EVENTS

## SAINT IGNATIUS CHURCH FESTIVAL 2023

by Anabelle de los Reyes

*To “paint a picture” for those who were not there...*

### The INTERNATIONAL MASS on OCTOBER 8

As one entered the St. Ignatius Church grounds, the festive atmosphere immediately filled the senses: Ushers warmly welcoming and distributing missalettes, song guides, the Pastor’s homily translated into different languages, children excitedly gathering together, choirs doing final rehearsals, and churchgoers happily greeting each other.

There could be no better way of opening the Church Festival 2023 than with the International Mass that brought the various communities and groups of St. Ignatius Church together. Some of the regular Masses were not held that day. Instead, there was one at 11:00 a.m. for all language groups. It was live-streamed in Our Lady’s Chapel, Saint Joseph Hall, and the Church lawn. Our Pastor, Fr. Toshiaki Koso SJ, presided with 9 priests of various nationalities concelebrating.



*The Liturgy*



*Choir consisting of different language groups*

While the Mass was celebrated in Japanese, various parts were done in other languages, reflecting the plurality of the congregation and the richness of the liturgical expressions. The Readings were proclaimed in Bahasa (Indonesian) and Polish, respectively; the Responsorial Psalm was sung in Vietnamese, and the Gospel was read in Japanese. The General Intercessions were in seven languages, while the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer were recited in each one’s native tongue.

What added a special touch and color to the liturgy and enhanced the solemnity and liveliness of the different parts of the Mass were the songs rendered by the various language choral groups. To bridge the “language divide” and enable everyone’s active participation, copies of the songs and intercessions with translations were given out.

In his homily, Father Koso enumerated “three prayers and desires” related to the theme: first, **“Let us connect with Jesus, accept each other, and walk together to the Father’s house”** which emphasized being “connected to Jesus” the Vine so that we may bear good and enduring fruit. The second invited everyone to **“go beyond”**, in the call toward **“structural and qualitative conversion in our way of doing and thinking...”** as we look toward the rest of the months towards the actual 25th anniversary of the Church’s dedication in October next year; and the third refers to the call of the Synod to walk together, a **“walking together” that includes everyone, discerning “the signs of the times” guided by the Holy Spirit.”**

After Communion, Father Koso called those to come forward who had submitted entries to the St. Ignatius Church 25th Anniversary Logo Competition. All in all, there were five entries in the Adult’s category and four in the Children’s category. He then presented the winning design. A Certificate of Participation was given to each participant in the competition.

### EXHIBITION TOWARDS THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

After the International Mass, Saint Joseph Hall was quickly transformed into a gallery divided into different sections displaying colourful visuals: the Japanese Sunday School children’s drawings celebrating St Ignatius Church’s 25th anniversary; the designs submitted for the 25th Anniversary Logo, coffee table books on the old and new church, and enlarged photographs of the Parish’s important events, visits, and celebrations. Most interesting were photographs telling the story of Saint Ignatius Church’s construction – from planning to completion - its transition from the old wooden church to the one standing at present. Also shown were the symbols and brief descriptions of the 12 Pillars of the Church corresponding to the twelve Apostles.



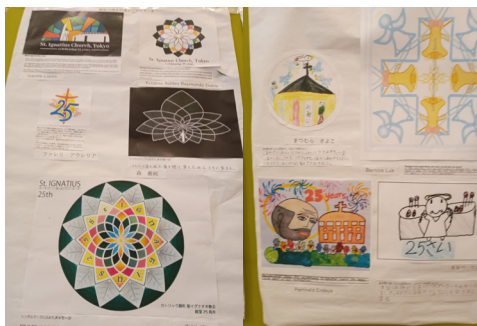
*Exhibit in St. Joseph Hall*



# ST. IGNATIUS NEWS AND CHURCH EVENTS

The Exhibit was a quick visual review of the “story” of Saint Ignatius Church. As the 25th Anniversary was launched, now the story continues to unfold. Again recalling the homily of Father Koso and linking his reflection to the call of the Synod to “walk together” what reverberates is: “Who are we walking with?” “...the Synod and our faith are calling for a renewed awareness that the Church is walking with all people living on earth, beyond the framework of fellow believers... it is God’s people on a journey with humanity.”

Other Pictures for you to enjoy...



Logo Entries, Left: Adult Category, Right: Children Category



Spanish Group singing, Enciendeme



English Sunday School Performance



Japanese children



Vietnamese dance



Children Reading activity



Japanese Presentation



Games for children



# SPECIAL FEATURE

## What is Synodality, again?

by Sr. Flor M. Florece, FI

Now the gathering on the SYNOD ON SYNODALITY has ended (October 29). The participants have gone back to their respective countries. How will it continue? Was it not a one-time event that will fade away? What happens now?

Let me go back to October 8 when a symposium, entitled, “What is Synodality, again?” was one of the main activities of the celebration. How can we become a synodal church? What is missing from St. Ignatius Church as a synodal church?

There were five speakers. The first one, Fr. Bony James SJ gave an “Explanation of the Basic Parts of the Synod based on Youth and International Perspectives.” The second was Fr. Kotaro Mori SJ, “From the Experience of Participating in the World Youth Day 2023.” I, the third speaker, representing English-speaking members, talked about “Introduction of Initiatives for Synod in the English Community”; the fourth, Fr. Antonius Firmansyah, SJ and the fifth speaker, Fr. Nguyen Thanh Nha, SJ spoke from the perspective of their Indonesian and Vietnamese communities. This was followed by a short Open Forum.

I began by saying that I myself am an example of the many challenges posed by “Synodality.” As a migrant, I wanted to talk with the largely Japanese audience spontaneously and deeply from my heart, but I felt constrained by the language. I could not do it with my level of Japanese ability. This feeling is not mine alone but is likewise that of the many foreigners who have been coming to St. Ignatius Church. They wanted so much to share with the Japanese and other language groups their thoughts, feelings, suggestions, and dreams about synodality but could not. And so, today, I told my largely Japanese audience, “I take the courage” to represent us migrants and share the process we went through as a group over the past six months in order to be “heard.” I gave them a prepared handout with a Japanese translation. I spoke in English, an experience itself for many of them.

Our group, consisting of leaders and volunteers in the John de Britto English Center, believes that Synodality is a LIVED experience in St. Ignatius Church. We are a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-lingual parish. “Journeying together” **is happening**, though not in its fullest or ideal sense as defined by the Vatican documents. All parishioners, not just leaders, need to be given more information and formation about SYNODALITY. They need accompaniment through formation sessions/activities/assemblies so that they can recognize and be sensitive to how it is manifested concretely, in parish life structures and activities. The challenges are real – lack of Japanese communication skills and vice-versa, need of much communication, vertical and horizontal (consultation, dialogue, dissemination of information, for example in the Bulletin/MAGIS/Mass Announcements). Be inclusive! The need for awareness of the human tendency to be judgmental, impatient of the pace of others, lacking in understanding differences in culture and ways of doing things; the need to reach out “outside our fences,” go beyond our comfort zones, etc. But the joys are real too – a growing realization and concern that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, that we are in the same boat and so we have to help one another! There is richness in plurality and diversity. We can do more in the mission by developing stronger bonds. And above all, it is vital that **WE BE LED BY THE SPIRIT**, so the importance of prayer and discernment, of an attitude of listening, openness, and flexibility.



*Synodality Speakers*

And so, let me go back to the question posed in the beginning of this article. Was the “SYNOD ON SYNODALITY” a kind of one-time event that will fade away? **The answer is in our hands and hearts!!**

### Highly recommended reference:

Pope Francis wants the synod in every parish. Here's how to bring it to yours.

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/10/24/synod-synodality-parish-meetings-246361>

# CHRISTMAS SEASON SCHEDULE

*As you plan ahead...*

This year, for the first time in six years, the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve Mass will coincide on December 24th (Sunday)

## CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE



### December 23rd (Sat.)

14:00 Christmas Mass for children and families (Japanese)  
19:30 (anticipated Mass, Vietnamese)

### December 24th (Sun., 4th Sunday of Advent)

Same schedule as regular Sunday Mass  
15:00 (Japanese), 17:00 (Japanese), 19:00 (Japanese, Candle Service), 21:00 (English, Christmas Eve Mass)\*  
\*Carolling in-between Masses (Church lawn)

### December 25th (Mon., Nativity Mass)

Same schedule as regular Sunday

### December 31st (Sun., Holy Family)

Same schedule as regular Sunday

### January 1st ( Mon. Mary, Mother of God)

Same schedule as Sunday



**YOU ARE INVITED!**

32nd Solemn Pontifical Mass in Gregorian Chant

**“Mass for the Children of Japan and of the World especially for those in need”**

Saturday November 11th. 2023 1:40pm

St. Mary's Cathedral, Tokyo

<https://catholicaction1951.com/2023/10/24/post-1627/>

# 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. Generoso Florez S.J.	Fr. Javier Garralda S.J.
Fr. Nguyen Thanh Nha S.J.	Fr. Etsuo Sekine, SJ

**Sister:** Sr. Ivette Sanchez, 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

November	
1	All Saints' Day (Solemnity)
2	All Soul's Day (Solemnity)
21	The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Memorial)
26	Christ, the King of the Universe
December	
3	First Sunday of Advent; Feast of St. Francis of Xavier
8	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity)
25	The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
31	Feast of the Holy Family

## Do Not Forget!

November	
19	12 p.m. International Mass (Vietnamese Group)
23	Advent Retreat (in Japanese)
24	Novena to St. Francis Xavier begins
23 & Dec 3	Church Bazaar
December	
17	English Center Christmas Party
31	Year-End Retreat (in English)

## Pope's Prayer Intentions

### November: For the Pope

We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

### Special Prayers

For a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

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