



# Opening the Gift of *Jesus* This Christmas

**F**or most of us, Christmas is a sacred time of giving and receiving gifts. Without doubt, there is the joy of giving and the wonders of receiving. Sometimes we forget there are gifts which we have received that have been inadvertently left unopened since last Christmas. This can happen to any one of us, and we may be left feeling embarrassed.

Imagine if God had given us our birthday gift and we had forgotten about it. We neglected it because we were too busy, or we were careless with disregard, thinking that it was not a worthwhile gift to open. How would you feel if you were God? You

might feel angry, indignant, or even vindictive towards such ingrates.

Perhaps, the greatest gift in our life is — the gift of faith to be able to believe, trust and hope. Yet, the gift of “God-is-with-us” — Emmanuel, could have become that gift that was nearly discarded by none other than Joseph when he thought that he should spare Mary the embarrassment and publicity by divorcing her! Thankfully, divine intervention came to the rescue. The angel appeared to him in a dream to tell him not to be afraid to take Mary

home as his wife. Fortunately, his humility and obedience redeemed his misjudgment and honour.

My dear friends, as we draw closer to Christmas, we should take some time to consider how we can make a difference with Jesus giving us the vote of confidence by his coming among us.

Instead of giving gifts to each child or to each other, someone in need and give that person your time and attention, showing your care in a practical manner.

I know of one family which decided that they would reach out to other families in need during this Christmas, by spending time with them to see what help was needed.

Maybe you can think of reaching out to someone to give them the gift of peace by asking for forgiveness for past hurts and pain, caused because of misunderstanding or pride that got in the way of reconciliation.

If there is anything that should truly mean something to you, it would be to treasure God’s gift of love and friendship in the very person of Jesus, born among us. All it takes for us to accept that gift is to receive it, open it and share it with others.

May I wish you God’s gift of friendship and love this Christmas.

FR COLINTAN, SJ



## PARISH NEWS

### OFFICE CLOSURE

The Parish office is closed on Christmas Day this Wednesday 25 December.

**Christmas Eve Masses:** The Children's Pageant is at 5.30pm, followed by Mass. Reflection and worship at 11.00pm before Midnight Mass.

**Christmas Day Masses:** 8.15am, 10.15am, 12.15pm and 6pm.

Please note that there will be no **DIVINE MERCY PRAYER SESSION** on Wednesday 25 December, and 1 January 2020.

All are invited to spread joy at the **SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MASS AND PARTY FOR THE AGED, SICK AND HOUSEBOUND** by the PaCes Ministry. This Friday 27 December, 2.30pm. Sign-up forms at Place of Gathering and registration closes on 22 December.

There will be **COMMUNAL PRAYER** at the Columbarium after the 6.00pm Mass on Friday 27 December, on the Feast of St John, Apostle and Evangelist. All are welcome.

### THANKSGIVING AND NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCELEBRATED MASS

Tuesday 31 December at 6.00pm. All are welcome.

### SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY MOTHER OF GOD

Wednesday 1 January 2020

Masses are at 8.15am, 10.15am, and 6.00pm

There will be recitation of the Rosary at 5.15pm before the 6.00pm mass. All are welcome.

### FIRST FRIDAY – SACRED HEART OF JESUS MASS

Friday 3 January, 8.00pm. Please note that there will be NO 6.00pm Mass. Come with family and friends to renew your consecration to the Heart of Jesus.

**INFANT BAPTISMS** Sunday 12 January at 3.00pm  
Parents and godparents are required to attend a briefing on Sunday 5 January, 3pm at La Storta room.  
Registration forms are available at the church office or website. Please choose a saint's name for your child.  
Contact Ching Farn (9388 7132) & Paul Tang, or Stephanie (9116 6898) & John Ng (9677 3632).

**LANDINGS**, a Ministry of Reconciliation for Catholics returning to the Church, is starting its first programme at St Ignatius on 28 May, 2020. If you wish to support this Ministry as a volunteer, or if you are or know someone who is thinking about returning to the church, do attend the Info Night on Thursday 9 January, 8pm-10pm at the Annex Hall.  
<https://forms.gle/1m27rF9hUSHMUxcw8>

### ST IGNATIUS 60TH JUBILEE SURVEY

The St Ignatius 60th Jubilee Celebration Committee invites all parishioners to complete a survey on how we should celebrate the Parish Jubilee. Please go to <http://tinyurl.com/DJSurvey2019> to complete the survey. Alternatively, the QR code to access the survey is displayed at the Place of Gathering. You may scan the QR code with your mobile phone. Your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated.



**SJI INTERNATIONAL** students are at the Place of Gathering this weekend to sell ring-pull and other up-cycled Christmas products in aid of the Purple Community Fund. The charity supports families living in the Tondo dump sites in the Philippines.

### STAYING VIGILANT IN CHURCH

In this Season of Peace and Love, let us be mindful of our role of care and responsibility for each other, and remain vigilant of acts against Love.

Please take note of the following security and safety tips:

1. If you notice any person behaving in a suspicious manner, report it to a Warden, Help Desk or Hospitality Minister.
2. If you notice an unattended bag or observe someone about to leave a bag unattended, alert a Warden, Help Desk or Hospitality Minister.
3. Be familiar with the Church's exits and evacuation routes before Mass begins.
4. Follow the instructions of Wardens if there is an evacuation. Do not panic and rush when you are being evacuated. Remember your safest way to safety is to evacuate in an orderly and brisk manner. Please also do not collect your vehicle from the car park in the event of an emergency evacuation.
5. Finally, if you see something threatening safety and security in your Church, inform someone in charge.

### RIP NEWS– RISEN IN THE LORD

Wong Siew Ngoh – 82 years old

Departed: 14 December 2019

## NCC NEWS

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings start at 8.00pm.

### ZONE A DISTRICT 1— ST PAUL THE APOSTLE

Wednesday 8 January 2020, Room Sh-02-E

Programme: The Pivotal Players : St Thomas Aquinas –  
The Theologian

### ZONE B DISTRICT 3

Thursday 26, December Rm #02 SH-F

Programme: 1) Daily Word of God

2) The Eucharist (DVD –Rev. Robert E. Barron)

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Jerome Leon, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest  
Angela Kurnadi Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Cheryl Lek Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator  
Robert Ong Sacristan ★ David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Communications Manager

# All I want for Christmas

If Jesus is the greatest gift of all, why are our Christmas lists crowded with expensive, impersonal must-haves? Why do we dread buying presents even for the people we love?

No matter how determined we are to keep our focus clear during Advent, we find the calm and joy of the season allayed with hurry and worry. By no means the least of our stresses is Christmas shopping.

The custom takes its cue from the giving of gifts to the infant Jesus by the Wise Men, as recorded in Matthew's Gospel. As early as 248 AD, Origen interpreted the significance of the gifts: gold symbolises Jesus's kingship, frankincense his deity, and myrrh his mortality. Gold can also represent dignity, frankincense one's true nature, and myrrh one's vulnerability. These are gifts that resonate, speaking of a knowing between the giver and the receiver. They offer recognition, admiration and love.

So as a gift to yourself, why not set aside reflective time to write your gift list in the same spirit? Why not create a list that reflects the marvelling of the Wise Men, the mind-boggling generosity of God, the gorgeousness of your friends and family, and the thrill that you have had when you received a truly apt gift?

What makes a truly apt gift? Children are better at receiving with glee, so throw your mind back to a wonderful Christmas or birthday in your childhood. It's more like the offerings of the Wise Men, which reflected their kaleidoscope of moods. It's more like the Incarnation, where God gave us what we most needed. Look for a king in a palace, and instead you find a baby in a barn. And what about Jesus himself, what did he give? Not tracts or alms, but bread. Fish. Healing. Forgiveness. And, with everything, stories. In Luke 7, we see a great example of the risk and the love that comes with real gift-giving: a sinner pours ointment and her tears on Jesus's feet and wipes them with her hair. This gift is intimate for both giver and receiver, so much so that it embarrasses the host and the disciples into meanness of spirit. But Jesus, the receiver, is not embarrassed. He is deeply moved

because her gift is truly apt.

So what do you want to give? What would be apt from you and apt for the people you love? Read through your list of names, slowly. Making time for these people, thinking of and praying for them regularly, would be a bigger gift than a book or perfume. Treat your gift list as a meditation or prayer, and bless the people you love. Ask yourself these questions, and see which resonate best with which people:

## 1. Gold, frankincense or myrrh?

Would they most appreciate a gift that will make them feel admired, or make them feel known, or make them feel cared for? I know what kind of a year my close friends and family have had. I can probably guess quite accurately which of these three will most resonate with each of them.

## 2. What would I give them if I had no money at all?

When I was a teenager, my father was self-employed, and one Christmas I had nothing to spend on friends' gifts. (The cause of pain was not due to my generous character, sadly, but because they were wealthy, and I felt humiliated.) So I spent four weeks making pompoms and turning them into creatures. A family of owls for an academic friend, Igor the Spider for a fan of the character, a bee for the hardest working. Everyone loved them. Now in my forties, I recently discovered that two friends still have them. I thought far more carefully about the characters of my friends in making those gifts than I would have done by rushing round the shops.

## 3. What would I give if I could give them the moon?

When my father was dying, for three or four months he received a constant stream of letters from people whose lives he had touched, telling him what his influence had been on them. All were handwritten, and they were a source of incredulous joy to him. I was filled with gratitude that those people had made the time. It made me wonder why we have to be dying before the people who

love us will stop to say so, carefully and thoroughly. These letters were exactly the gift that he was yearning for. They combined the myrrh he was so sensitised to with a sweetness of frankincense.

Is there anything you can give the people you love, no matter how small a symbol, that will turn their thoughts happily towards that yearning?

## 4. What do I really treasure? And what about them?

Which 10 things would you rescue if your house was burning down? It might be a photograph, a journal, a souvenir from a journey or adventure, an item given to you by someone deeply loved. Knowing the people as you do, what objects might they treasure? Is there a photo you could print that would evoke wonderful memories? A beautiful, blank journal? An ordinary item they would associate happily with you, or with the history of your friendship?

If my focus is solely on the giver or on the receiver, I worry about getting it wrong, appearing stupid, or appearing too mean or too lavish. Real gifts are about the cord of connection that runs between two individuals. They are an opportunity to relish and celebrate the unique nature of that connection.

By turning the gift list-planning into a meditation on my friends, I give myself the chance to approach them more as God does. I consider them with attentiveness, wanting something special for them, a gift that is about both of us. The gift itself may be unexpected or mundane, simple or untidy. But the process of giving is charged with a different kind of Christmas.

TAKEN FROM AN ARTICLE BY SARAH BROSCOMBE FOR *THINKING FAITH*, THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF THE JESUITS IN BRITAIN





## JESUIT NEWS

### FINDING THE 'STAR' | NEW YEAR DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Rejuvenate spiritually in the New Year by growing your relationship with the Lord God. Spend some time in silence, contemplating God in Scripture. An optional space for spiritual-conversation will be provided. Those new to silent retreats are most welcome.

Date & Time: Saturday 11 January, 9.30am – 5pm

Facilitator: Agustinus Tanudjaja, SJ

Contribution: \$60

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/20star20>

**Jesuit Regional Curia, Telephone: 6469 7356**

Fr Christopher Soh, SJ, Fr James Tan, SJ

**Kingsmead Hall, Jesuit Community, Tel: 6466 3225**

Fr Gerald Tseng, SJ, Fr Charles Sim, SJ, Fr Leslie Raj, SJ, Fr Agustinus Tanudjaja, SJ,  
Fr Gregory Tan, SJ, Msgr Philip Heng, SJ, Fr Adrian Danker, SJ

**Kingsmead Centre, Tel: 6467 6072 Jesuit Mission Office Tel: 6463 6022**

## ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

### ACMI FUNDRAISING DINNER

Tables at \$10,000, \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$700. Saturday 15 February, 7pm, at St Joseph's Institution Junior, 3 Essex Rd, Singapore 309331.

The Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People (ACMI) provides support in areas of Case Management; Skills Development – equipping migrants with vocational and language skills; and Community Outreach – Programmes that foster interaction and understanding between migrant and local communities. Book your table to support vulnerable migrant workers in Singapore. Email: [acmi@catholic.org.sg](mailto:acmi@catholic.org.sg). Your donation is eligible for tax deduction.

### 2019 LOVE IN THE CITY — MINISTER OF LONELINESS

Drama presentation of a journey on the Camino de Santiago, by Walk on Water Productions and the Office for the New Evangelisation.

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/2019loveinthecity>

Show Time: 2:30pm

Date: Saturday 28 December

Venue: Agape Village (Multi-purpose Hall)

### GOOD FOOD, GOOD CAUSE AT CROSSINGS CAFÉ

Support a Catholic social enterprise that serves hearty and affordable local and western fare. The café provides employment opportunities for the disadvantaged, and donates all profits to charity. At Crossings Café (#01-01 Catholic Centre, 55 Waterloo Street, S187954)

### Church Office

120, King's Road, Singapore 268172 or  
8, Victoria Park Road, Singapore 266492

### Entrance via 8 Victoria Park Road

Kingsmead Hall (Priests' Residence), St Ignatius Hall, Sacred Heart Hall, Kingsmead Centre (for Ignatian Spirituality & Counselling)

### Sunday Masses

Saturday: 6.00pm

Sunday: 6.45am, 8.15am, 10.15am, 12.15pm  
and 6.00pm

### Weekday Masses

Monday – Friday: 7.00am & 6.00pm

Saturday: 7.00am

### Confessions

Friday & Saturday: 5.40pm

Sunday Mass: 20mins before Mass begins

### Infant Baptism (each month)

Briefing for parents & godparents (compulsory):  
1st Sunday, 3.00pm

Baptism: 2nd Sunday, 3.00pm sharp

Registration forms are available at front  
of Church office.

### Weddings

Couples must make themselves known to the  
priest at least one year before the wedding.

Contact: Sacristan, Robert Ong (8511 4614)

### Inigo Bookstore Opening Hours

Saturday: 4.30pm to 7.00pm

Sunday: 8.00am to 2.00pm, 5.30pm to 7.00pm

Closed on Monday to Friday.

Enquiry: Peter Hong 9749 3702

### Sick, Elderly and Homebound

Please contact the parish office if pastoral help  
is needed for a parishioner who is homebound  
or hospitalised. In emergencies, you may also  
contact the priests' residence at 6466 3225.

### Visiting Hours (Columbarium)

Open daily from 6.30 am to 8.00 pm

(including weekends & Public Holidays)

Memorial Mass at the Main Church every

4th Friday, 6.00 pm for all deceased  
parishioners and families, followed by prayers  
in the Columbarium.

### Bereavement

Please contact the parish Sacristan, Robert  
Ong (8511 4614) for help and advice before  
contacting the funeral director.

**Church of St Ignatius has no official social  
media account.**

#### WEEKLY

##### Rosary Devotion in Church

Monday to Saturday, after 7am Mass and  
Monday to Friday 5.15pm to 5.45pm,  
except first Friday of the month

##### Intercessory Prayers

Tuesday, 2.30pm in Sacred Heart Hall  
Adoration Room, Level 2

Catholic content online, login:

[www.FORMED.org](http://www.FORMED.org); parish code: 4904ed

##### Gentle Light

Tuesday, 10am – 12noon in St Francis

Xavier Chapel (Kingsmead)

Thursday, 10am – 12noon in Sacred Heart

Canteen (Room SH-A)

##### Divine Mercy Devotion

Every Wednesday after 6.00pm Mass in

the Main Church.

##### Christian Meditation

Friday, 2.30pm in St Francis Xavier Prayer

Room (Kingsmead)

#### MONTHLY – in Main Church

##### Sacred Heart of Jesus Mass

Every 1st Friday, 8.00pm (No 6.00pm Mass)

Followed by Eucharistic Adoration

by Generation CHRIST!

##### Children Eucharistic Adoration

Every 3rd Friday, 7.45pm. No session in

June and December

##### Memorial Mass

Every 4th Friday, 6.00pm, followed by

prayers in the Columbarium