



The Importance of Gathering Together



One memorable meal I had was when I was studying overseas and stayed in a Catholic hostel. I made friends from all over the world and one day, a Kenyan friend invited a few of us to a meal at an Ethiopian restaurant. We sat on low chairs around a low table and in the middle was a grand platter that had a huge, spongy flatbread piled high with meat and vegetables. This bread, called *injera*, is the staple of Ethiopia and is meant to be eaten in a communal meal. It was a glorious meal as the gravy from the meat and vegetables soaked into the bread, allowing the beautiful flavours to merge. But what was better than that was the camaraderie that the meal brought out – us gathering around the bread, sharing it as companions, enjoying each other's company as much as we enjoyed the food. I believe this small experience of communion that can give an insight into what Jesus meant when he said **"I am the bread of life"**.

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven", said the Lord, indicating that he comes not just as bread that provides nourishment for the body, but comes to bring the eternal life that comes from God. Just as the bread, the *injera* that my friends and I ate, did more than just tickle our palates and

nourish our bodies, it helped build our friendship. The bread who is Jesus comes not just to assuage our hunger, but to bring us together as the people of God. That is why we gather together at Mass, around the table of the Lord, to pray and to receive the Eucharist, the bread of life that is our salvation. It is also why being at Mass is not just about receiving the Eucharist, but also about the communion that our gathering brings about.

All of us must have felt that this sense of communion took a bit of a hit in this pandemic. However, the truth of Jesus remains and provides a sure source of hope for all of us. While we look forward to the times when we can gather again around the Lord's table as a community, we also realise that we continue to carry the joy and memories of being a community deep within our hearts. This helps us to understand what Jesus, being the living bread from heaven, is all about. No matter how good earthly bread is, we will get hungry again in time. The bread of life, however, is different. Jesus told the disciples that **"whoever eats this bread will live forever"**, reminding us that as we partake of the bread of life, we also partake in life everlasting. And it is this reality, along with our faith in the Lord and hope in the future that enables us to endure

the struggles of not being able to go for Mass in-person as we used to be able to.

It will help us bear with our current situation if we hold fast to the fact that the bread of life is freely given to us as a result of God's providence. Just as the Israelites received manna in the desert and the prophet Elijah was given food to eat as he was fleeing his persecutors, we too are able to receive all that the Lord offers, as long as we are open to that. In a similar way, the relationships that we treasure are also graces that are given to us, privileged spaces where we can encounter companions in our faith journeys. The Lord provides what we need to journey with him towards our salvation and what we have to do is to turn ourselves towards him who is bread and who gives life.

As we celebrate National Day, we also remember how **we are called to be this bread to the wider community, life-giving witnesses of the reality of salvation as we work together with people from all ethnicities, tongues and religions to build a society of love and joy**. Blessings this 56th National Day, and may Singapore progress towards a hope-filled future.

FR STANLEY GOH, SJ

60th Jubilee of the Church of St Ignatius

Our Cannonball Moment, Shared & Celebrated

31 July 2020 - 31 July 2021

In August 2019, Fr Colin Tan, SJ, set-up the Diamond Jubilee Committee to organise the Church's 60th Anniversary celebrations. With his guidance, the Committee decided to hold a Jubilee Year, focused on two aspects of the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences - to "Walk with the Poor and Excluded", and to "use Ignatian Spirituality and the Ignatian Exercises to show the way to God".

Our Cannonball Moment

To kick-off our Jubilee, the Committee had planned for a Feast Day Carnival and Mass on 31 July 2020, the Feast of St Ignatius. The first half of our Jubilee would have focused on Ignatian Spirituality, providing opportunities for parishioners to deepen their experience of the Ignatian Exercises. Parishioners would have been sent forth to "Walk with the Poor and Excluded" by committing to 60 hours of outreach and service. Our Jubilee Year would then have rounded off with a Closing Mass and a rousing musical on 31 July, 2021.

Unfortunately, these plans were foiled due to COVID-19. Initially, it appeared as if a rug was pulled from under our feet. However, drawing parallels to the spiritual awakening and great moment of conversion of St Ignatius, it became clear upon hindsight that the onset of Covid-19 had been our "Cannonball moment". While it appeared that our dreams of grand celebrations were shattered, just like St Ignatius' military ambitions, Christ was guiding us into a deeper and more personal encounter with Him.

Our Jubilee Year

The Jubilee Year began with a small 50-person Mass celebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio to Singapore, Archbishop Marek Zalewski. Concurrently, Fr Colin announced in his feast day message that Pope Francis had imparted his Apostolic blessings and granted our parish a Papal indulgence for the Jubilee Year.

Deeply moved, the Committee along with a group of artistic parishioners set out to build a **Door of Grace** beautifully adorned



with an adaptation of the Loyola Coat of Arms. The Wolves and Cauldron retell the generosity of the Loyola family, who provided such abundance of food for the Spanish soldiers, that there was always enough leftovers for the wolves to eat.

The Door of Grace serves as a symbol of Christ's mercy and a reminder to live out our call to "Walk with the Poor and Excluded". Philip Prasetio, a parish youth, shared that receiving the Papal Indulgence spurred him towards doing works of devotion, penance and charity. "I practised devotion by spending as much time before the Blessed Sacrament as possible. Penance, by going to confession often, and charity, as I strived to reflect the love of Christ in Spirit-filled conversations, especially with those from different walks of life."



In December 2020, we held a **Jubilee Prayerthon** - 60 hours Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. This was welcomed by

For the Greater Glory of God



many parishioners who appreciated the opportunity to sit with Christ as Adoration Rooms had been closed since mid-February. Over 300 people turned up to spend time with Christ and to pray for the needs of the Church.

Before COVID-19, the Jubilee Committee had adopted Morning Star Community Services (MSCS) as our beneficiary. The intent had been for parishioners to volunteer at MSCS' weekly Care Nights, a four-hour weekday evening support programme for children aged 6 to 14 years. This was replaced by a fundraiser for MSCS which yielded \$87,000, far exceeding our target of \$60,000, truly bearing out the Loyola spirit of generosity.

On 12 February, 2021, Fr Colin unveiled the **Jubilee Commemorative Gallery** - a tribute to the many Jesuits who dedicated their lives to building our Parish.

Christ, the heart of our Jubilee

In a video message for our Feast Day on 31 July, 2021, Archbishop William Goh reminded parishioners that "even if we are not able to have a grand physical celebration... if we have a heart of thanksgiving and gratitude to

God, and our forefathers, it will inspire us to walk in their footsteps following St Ignatius - who taught us to give generously, without counting the cost."

The day ended with a **Night of Adoration**, where parishioners relished the opportunity to rest with the Lord. Alison Pinto, a PPC Exco member, shared that she found herself tearing up with a deep sense of gratitude to be before the Eucharist.

In his closing Jubilee message, Fr Colin said, "**The focus of our Diamond Jubilee is not on ourselves, but on how God has blessed us as a Parish community of disciples. For God has planted the seed of faith in us to be able to glorify Him in the church and serve in the Ignatian Spirit to meet the needs of the poor and those affected by the pandemic.**"

At the heart of Ignatian Spirituality, we are called to embark on a journey of "**Finding God in All Things**". Looking back, Christ was truly present amidst the uncertainties we faced in celebrating our Diamond jubilee. Through our Cannonball Moment, our Jubilee was transformed into a year of encounter with God's grace, mercy, and love.

Find out more about our Jubilee celebrations and watch our Feast Day Videos at www.jubilee-stignatius.com.





Words of Thanks...

The closing of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations found me brimming with gratitude. Gratitude to God and gratitude to the Jubilee committee members and the many others who have been working tirelessly since August 2019 to put the past year of celebrations together.

Theresa Foo – our treasurer, for being the voice of experience and practicality, her unwavering support and generosity.

Joseph Raj – ever wise and measured, he has been a pillar of support and sensibility throughout our two years. He is also the man behind the acquisition of our jubilee t-shirts and umbrellas!

Daniel Lee – Daniel was in the trenches with me from Day 1 to the end. Never shying away from any work to be done, from hunting down photos to manning the merchandise sales, he plugged the holes wherever there was a need. His humility and readiness to help is a true mark of a servant leader.

TK Wong – initiator and mover of many practical ideas through this whole journey such as the *Project for the Poor*; his decisiveness and confidence were the wind in our sails.

Simon Cheong – Simon spent many hours and days liaising with Fr Les, Chrestella, the interviewees and production house to produce our lovely Heritage video, which not only showcases our 60-year heritage and story, it also serves as a valuable and necessary archival resource for our Church.

Brendan Pinto – indispensable from beginning to end, Brendan created and maintained our Jubilee website, ran our 60-hour Prayerthon and the closing Night of Adoration. He is also behind much of our publicity, working relentlessly with the digital communications team and myself on publications for our various digital channels.

Outside of our committee is **Joyce Ang** our music director, who worked long and hard with Fr Stanley and the production team to produce the intimate and heartwarming interviews in "A Jesuit Is...". We thank Fr Stanley and the priests for sharing their thoughts and reflections so candidly, where their sincerity and holiness truly shone through. Joyce also worked hard on our original closing event before the heightened safety measures thwarted our plans! She has stood with us so cheerfully and graciously, a true Godsend.

Grateful thanks to **Bernard and Marie Teo** for the beautiful Door of Grace which has served to remind us of this special privilege of the pope's plenary indulgence for the past year.

The staff and volunteers of our church who have been amazing in their unwavering support throughout our celebrations – **Suzie, Pauline, Chrestella, David, Kumar, Suresh, Andrew and Dorothy** – they have gone far beyond the call of duty and rendered months of help behind the scenes for the sale of our merchandise, communications, and in the finance, administrative, logistics and technical ends behind all our projects. Our church is truly blessed to have them and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have made true friends in them.

I would also like to thank the **PPC Exco** for their support and trust in the planning of the Jubilee celebrations and the **Parish Financial Council** for their generous reception and support of our projects.

To all the many kind and generous parishioners and volunteers who have participated in and supported our Jubilee events and projects in one way or another, thank you!

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank **Fr Colin** for his immense involvement, direction and care for us in the past two years. He has not only given us guidance on project matters but more importantly on faith and trust in God. By his example of constant prayer, and quiet confidence in God's providence, our faith and love have grown, a priceless gift. Thank you Fr Colin for your holy and steadfast leadership.

Whilst it was a very challenging journey for me on many levels, there was also much joy in the process – from the friendships forged to the fellowships shared. The greatest joy was that we, as a team, could feel the hand of God at work with us throughout our preparations. For every of the numerous obstacles that strewed our path, solutions presented themselves often in the most unexpected of ways.

Even though the sense of inadequacy never quite left me, it was His assurance and presence which carried me through. I thank God for this blessing and privilege and the committee for giving me the opportunity to serve the Church for His greater glory.

MARIAN SNG

Chairperson, Diamond Jubilee Committee

PARISH NEWS

PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

The Parish Office will be closed on **Monday, 9 August** in view of the National Day public holiday.

AUGUST MASS BOOKINGS

Stage 3 Mass bookings for August opens on **10 August at 3pm** via myCatholic.sg. Parishioners will be able to book **ONE weekend Mass** and up to **FIVE weekday Masses** at each stage, subject to availability.

We would like to remind parishioners that those who are unvaccinated, especially the elderly and those who may be feeling unwell, are strongly advised to stay home and refrain from attending any in-person religious activities.

LIVESTREAM MASSES are available on the following days: Mondays - Fridays, 7.00pm. Saturday 6.00pm, Sunday 8.15am, 10.15am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm. Please go to bit.ly/stigslivestream

ADULT CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME

Our Parish will be launching a new confirmation programme for baptized and practising adult Catholics who have not yet been confirmed.

The programme comprises 6 preparatory sessions starting from **9 October 2021, every Saturday, 10.00-11.30am**. The confirmation mass will be held on **Saturday, 20 November 2021 at 2.00pm**.

Register at <https://forms.gle/ZF8iH759Bqqcdgt8A> latest by **16 August**.

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (CCD)

CCD is a faith formation programme for children, aged 7 to 13 years old attending international schools. Online registration for intake year 2021-2022 opens from **1st - 31st August 2021**. All students (new or returning) are required to register. **Only ONLINE registrations will be accepted**. Visit <https://bit.ly/stigsCCD> for more details.

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL COMMUNITY

In baptism, we are led to live as Christ taught us. St Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4 what this new life in Christ involves. Join us for a Bible Sharing on Ephesians 4: 17-27 this **Wednesday, 11 August at 8pm**. Email us at cpg.cosi@gmail.com for details.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

(RE)CLAIMING OUR GIFT OF FAITH

Come discover how to nurture your God-given gifts and unite with fellow young adults in the Catholic community via this virtual **Young Stewards Conference** on **Saturday, 14 August 2021, 3-6pm**.

Register at tinyurl.com/youngstewardsconference

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR (LISS)

Do you desire a new life in the Holy Spirit? Join in a series of 10 weekly sessions of hybrid online Zoom and in-person sessions held from **24 September - 26 November 2021**. Includes live praise & worship, talks and small group discussions. Limited places available.

Sign up at tinyurl.com/saccreliss21sg

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Gregory Tan, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest
Pauline Khoo Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Natalie Ang Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator
David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Sacristan ★ Chrestella Setiyadi Communications Manager