

# Heart Beats



Newsletter Of The International Community Of Sacred Heart Cathedral

December 2013

**“May the words of our mouths (and those we write) and the meditations of our hearts, be pleasing in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer” - Psalm 19:14**

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Advent is upon us once again. Traditionally, we understand Advent as the commemoration of the long wait for the coming of the Savior of the world. However, the coming of the Savior already took place once in history. And this savior who came is still with us waiting. That is why, I invite you to reflect this time, not anymore on our waiting but as the Messiah's long wait for us to take those steps to follow Him more closely, to meet Him more nearly and to love Him more dearly. In other words, to be active followers of Christ in our deeds. Since God's work of salvation is always anchored in humanity's willful participation.

This active following begins with our humble recognition of God's presence in our lives because He has long since arrived and He is now with us – “Emmanuel” meaning “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). He came to dwell with us and in us and we simply need to invite Him in. The stories of the gospel readings within this season are stories of how ordinary people were more than willing to let God in, like John the Baptist and Mary, and experienced the amazing things He can do with lives surrendered to Him.

Here at Sacred Heart Cathedral, may we always aim to let God in through each other and by the spirit of communion regardless of the colour of our skin, the language we speak and the size of our wallets. This unity was palpable in many forms last month - when many of us came together to work hard and share food and fun during the Bazaar. We also thank all those who contributed to the new issue of *Heart Beats* because many felt welcome and that they truly belonged to the Sacred Heart community through its pages.

There will be more avenues for us to work together in the coming days and months but like the agents of God's entry into humanity, we cannot expect a smooth journey ahead. At times, it will be shaky and less than desirable but we will move on in the spirit of unity convinced that God will see us through.

Let me take the opportunity to wish you all a grace-filled Advent and a Happy Christmas!

*Fr. Roed Desamparado, CM*



*Heart Beats wishes its readers a  
Blessed & Holy Christmas and  
a Happy New Year!*



Bishop of the Diocese	: Most Rev. Raphael Umemura, DD
Administrator	: Fr. Ignacio Masahiko Iino
Assistants	: Fr. Ha Minh Tu, Fr. Roed Desamparado, CM
Mass Schedule (Japanese)	: Daily Mass at 07:00 on weekdays
	: Sunday Mass at 07:00, 08:15 & 12:00
	: Sunday Mass at 18:00 on Saturdays
Mass Schedule (English)	: Sunday Mass at 10:00
Mass Schedule (Spanish)	: Sunday Mass at 14:00 on the second Sunday of every month (except August)
Confessions (English)	: Every first Friday and Saturday of the month, from 16:00 ~ 18:00.

**Sacred Heart Cathedral, 44 Yamate-Cho, Naka -Ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 231-0862**

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- Editor** : Karen Gomez  
**Designer** : Savio Gomez  
**Circulation** : [heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com](mailto:heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com)  
**Columnists** : Caroline Kennedy  
Chisato Nakamae

#### Calling All Photographers .....

If you would like to have your beautiful lens captures of the season (minimum 8 megapixel resolution) published in the newsletter, kindly send your photographs to the Editor.

#### Calling All Writers .....

If you would like to pen down a spiritual, human interest, or any relevant feature for *Heart Beats*, kindly send your articles to the Editor.



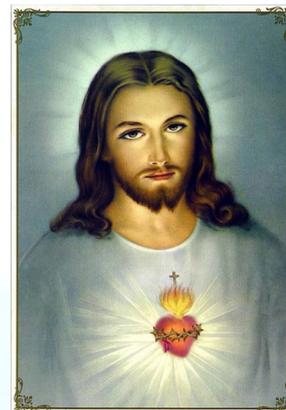
## Dates For Your Diary

- 14 December** : Block Rosary at 2.00 pm  
**24 December** : Christmas Eve Mass at Futaba at 8:00 pm with  
Christmas Carols at 7:30 pm  
**31 December** : New Year's Eve Mass (in Japanese only) at  
Sacred Heart Cathedral at 12:00 midnight  
**04 January** : Choir Rehearsal followed by Potluck  
at 10.00 am  
**12 January** : Sunday Bible School at 9.00 am



## Prayer of Consecration To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus

- Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque



I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honour, love and glorify the Sacred Heart. This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His, and to do all things for the love of Him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to Him. I therefore take You, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in You, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from Your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease You or resist Your holy will; let your pure love imprint Your image so deeply upon my heart, that I shall never be able to forget You or to be separated from You.

May I obtain from all Your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in Your Heart, for in You I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to You. Amen.

## Special Thanks!

Last November, a special committee from the Sacred Heart Cathedral International Community Council was formed, to gather cash donations for those who were severely affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The response of the community was positive and immediate. The group was able to raise an amount of **¥ 393,000** at a special collection during the English Mass of November 17, 2013. We thank those who have generously given their support and help.



### Children's Mass

Children's Liturgy, which used to take place on the fourth Sunday of each month, has been replaced with Children's Mass since the beginning of the new international academic year. Sunday Mass on November 24<sup>th</sup>, the last Sunday in Ordinary Time as well as the Solemnity of Christ the King, happened to be Children's Mass last month.

Thirteen of the children who attend Sunday School get assigned to serve during this mass as lectors and in the Offertory Procession according to their age groups. This is to encourage the children to take an active part in Holy Mass and to inculcate in them a love for the Eucharist and the Eucharistic Lord. With each mass, the children learn better what takes place during mass, the behavior expected from them and their assignments are carried out in an orderly manner with the help of the catechists. The exchange between Fr. Roed and the children during his homily is very animated and enjoyable for the children.

The children are also encouraged to read the Gospel of that Sunday before they come in to church and to express their feelings or what they understand through the Gospel either by drawing or by writing something. These paintings are usually taken up and offered during the Offertory Procession by the children themselves and it is touching to see quite a lot of children coming eagerly with their offering. All credit to those parents who carry on the task of their faith formation in the home.

Our catechetical team always appreciates the patience and understanding which the parishioners demonstrate toward Children's Mass.

The Feast of Christ the King was celebrated in due form with the choir's grand rendition in praise to the King of Kings.



### Block Rosary Devotion

A few of us parishioners get together once a month to pray the rosary together for all our needs, along with a sharing of reflections on the gospel reading of the day. This takes place in a different host person's home every month followed by a fellowship meal. Come join us pray together. Last month's rosary was on held on November 9th.



### Bible Study Potluck



Our monthly Bible Study group decided to hold its Christmas fellowship in the form of a potluck lunch on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Since it coincided with Fr. Roed's birthday, we decided to have a joint celebration and invite the rest of the parishioners to the potluck feast as well.

The morning of December 1<sup>st</sup> saw a big crowd assemble in the church basement to wish Fr. Roed and join in the fellowship and lunch. After a short time of praise and worship, Fr. Roed cut his birthday cake while we all sang 'Happy Birthday' and the 'Birthday Blessing'.

The tables were laden with a variety of food - palabok, moussaka, chicken adobo, kheema rolls and desserts, to mention a few.

It was wonderful to see everyone enjoy the food and each other's company on a day on which we began the season of Advent, celebrated the birthday of our very own Fr. Roed as well as celebrated six months of meeting together as a Bible Study group to grow in the Lord and to grow as a community.



## Festival Of Nine Lessons And Carols

The Festival of “Nine Lessons and Carols” is a traditional format for a Christian worship service in Advent. Each of the lessons narrate the series of events in the history of God’s plan of salvation - from the fall of man to God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaiah’s prophecies about the coming Messiah through the seed of Jesse (David) until the time He actually arrives, culminating at the nativity scene - through nine readings from the Word of God interspersed with choral singing comprising hymns and carols.

This format was based on an order drawn up by Edward White Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for Christmas Eve 1880 in Truro, Cornwall. It has since been adapted and used by other churches all over the world. This lovely tradition has been kept alive in the Bluff area of Yokohama since the mid 1950s. And in the 1970s, Fr John Berg combined the choirs of Christ Church and Sacred Heart Cathedral to form a joint choir to sing at this Advent service. Though he left in 2005, this joint effort continues in the spirit of friendship between the two churches whilst celebrating the good news together.

This year, the service was held on the evening of December 1<sup>st</sup> at Christ Church with many people from both parishes in attendance.

Under the expertise of choir director Scott McCall, the choir sang from a wide repertoire of old beloved carols such as “Once In Royal David’s City” and “O Come All Ye Faithful” along with new music ranging from sweet lullabies like “Myn Lyking” to robust hymns such as “O Come Emmanuel” and “The Truth From Above”.

After the service, the congregation mingled over fruit cake and mulled wine in the church hall. Many thanks to Fr Andrew Dangerfield and Yutaka Nakamae for their assistance in coordinating this service.



## Parish Christmas Dinner



The Sacred Heart Guild has been sponsoring this Christmas dinner for a while now and once again, it took place on December 7<sup>th</sup> at the YC&AC.

Earlier, this dinner used to be held in the church basement with the food being catered from the Negishi base. It was later decided to move it to the YC&AC. From next year onwards, the International Community Council will take over the organization of this event.

The dinner started at 6 pm with the ‘Grace Before Meals’ being said by Fr. Roed. The succulent dinner was served immediately thereafter, the menu being turkey and trimmings, cod fillet, an assortment of salads, veggies and desserts alongside a cash bar.

Following which, there was a story-telling time for all the children by Fr. Andrew (our special guest from Christ Church), a Raffles draw, Santa’s arrival from the North Pole and subsequent gift giving. There was also carol singing, with the usual “Twelve Days Of Christmas” sung by everyone while dancing and a special carol sung in Tagalog by the Filipino group. The dinner concluded at 9 pm as scheduled.

The dinner and the warm sense of camaraderie was enjoyed by all the 89 parishioners who attended the same.



## Out And About In Japan

*“Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la la la la la...”*

Boughs of holly might not be quite as popular here in Japan, but there is still lots of festive cheer during the month of December to help you get into the mood and enjoy this special time of year.

December in Japan brings the sounds and sparkling lights of the festive season along with the cold, dry weather and beautiful views of a snow-capped Mt Fuji. Christmas here may not be the same as you would experience at home or hold the same meaning for your Japanese friends as it does for you, but the lead up is certainly no different to anywhere else in the world with gift giving, carols and gatherings with family and friends. Santa finds his way here too and December 24th is the culmination of the celebrations here, with the tradition being to gather with loved ones to exchange gifts and enjoy a special dinner together. Make sure you order your Christmas cake early though! The choices are endless and many people will place their cake order early and collect it on Christmas Eve. Sogo is the go-to place for the best cakes in Yokohama...

The build-up to Christmas wouldn't be the same without the beautiful Christmas illuminations you can enjoy in almost every city in the world at this time of the year. And Japan certainly impresses when it comes to Christmas illuminations! Why not take some time out during December to enjoy the displays around town...

- ★ The “Starlight Garden” at Tokyo Midtown is now open after dark every evening until December 25th and features a beautiful carpet of sparkling lights and a laser light display.
- ★ The illuminations at Roppongi Hills and its surrounds also never fail to impress. Don't forget to stop by the Christmas Market for a glass of *glühwein* or to pick up some of the lovely handmade wooden ornaments on sale. It's fun to walk through the lobby of the nearby Grand Hyatt too and marvel at their beautiful Christmas Tree.
- ★ One of the more recent additions to “must-see” illuminations around Tokyo is the “Baccarat Eternal Lights” display at Ebisu Garden Place. This year they are displaying a 5 metre tall, 8,472 piece chandelier with 250 lights. Apparently it's one of the largest chandeliers in the world! Note to self... must go see!

The list of places to go is really endless. Here in Yokohama, we have Santa peering down at us from Star Jewellery, the beautiful lights in Motomachi and also the Christmas Market and Ice Rink to enjoy at the Red Brick Warehouses. Grab your cameras on Christmas Eve too as all the office buildings around Minatomirai will have their lights turned on between 16:30 and 21:30. There will also be a candle display on the 24th around the Red Brick Warehouse, so it promises to be a very bright evening around town!

If it is your first Christmas here, you might be surprised to see the trees and decorations being taken down on the 25th to make room for the New Years decorations... these too are very beautiful though and it is interesting to see the city transform overnight with large pine decorations appearing at the entrance to all buildings and shops.

New Year in Japan is a special experience and if you are here, try not to decline if offered any “mochi” rice cakes or any of the other New Year delicacies either...! They might not be what you are used to feasting on, but the opportunity might not come your way again - when in Rome after all!

- ★ Other things to look out for in December - December 23rd is a national holiday here in Japan in honour of the Emperor's birthday. If you happen to be in town on this day, I highly recommend a trip to the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. The Royal Family makes three scheduled appearances to greet the public and it's a rare opportunity to visit the inner gardens of the palace.
- ★ Experiencing the last sunset / first sunrise of the year is also a popular thing to do in Japan and places like Landmark Tower and Marine Tower will have special opening hours to cater for this.

*Caroline Kennedy*

## Recipe Of the Month

### Traditional Ginger Bread House

#### Ingredients:

- ✓ 200g (8 oz) soft light brown sugar
- ✓ 200g (8 oz) golden syrup
- ✓ 100g (4 oz) margarine (or butter)
- ✓ 2 tablespoons milk
- ✓ 400g (1 lb) plain flour
- ✓ 1 level teaspoon baking soda
- ✓ ½ level teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- ✓ 1 level teaspoon of ground ginger
- ✓ a large piece of thin cardboard paper

#### Directions:

Put sugar, golden syrup, margarine and milk in a small pan on gentle heat. Allow mixture to dissolve, stirring from time to time. Don't allow mixture to boil. Cool for a few minutes. Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl. Make a hollow in the center and pour in melted mixture, mix first with a wooden spoon and then with the hand to a fairly firm dough. Knead till smooth. Cover dough and chill for about half an hour until cold.

Meanwhile, cut pieces of cardboard paper to use as a guide for cutting out the house shapes: a side wall, 4½ x 8 inches; an end wall, 4½ x 5 inches; a triangular gable, 4½ x 3 x 3 inches; and a roof rectangle, 4½ x 9 inches. Tape the rectangular end wall piece to the triangular gable piece: match the long side of the triangle, 4½ inches, to one of the 4½ inch sides of the end wall. You need two of each. (This makes a big house. You can make it smaller, and use the leftover dough for baking ginger bread men, stars, Christmas trees etc).



Preheat oven to 170° C. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the chilled dough to about ½ cm (¼ in) thick and cut out the six pieces for the house, using card shapes as a guide. Lift pieces onto the baking trays lined with baking sheets leaving spaces between to allow for spreading. Bake two trays at a time for 15-20 minutes, till a light golden color. Remove from oven, then, using a sharp knife and card shapes, trim the gingerbread to the original shape while still hot. Cool on wire trays. When cold, store in air tight containers until assembling.

Ingredients for Royal Icing :

- ✓ 2 egg whites
- ✓ 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- ✓ 450g (1 lb) icing sugar, sieved

Directions:

Place egg whites and lemon juice in a bowl and beat to a froth with a wooden spoon. Add icing sugar, a tablespoon at a time, beating well after each addition. Continue adding the icing sugar until the mixture stands in firm peaks. Keep the icing covered with a damp cloth to prevent a crust from forming.

Spread or pipe a 9 inch line of icing onto a cake board, and press in one of the side walls so that it sticks firmly and stands upright. If necessary, spread or pipe a little extra icing along either side to help support it. Take an end wall and ice both the side edges. Spread or pipe a line of icing on the board at a right angle to the first wall, and press the end wall into position. Repeat this process with the other two walls until they are all in position. Leave the walls to harden together for at least two hours before putting on the roof. Spread or pipe a thick layer of icing on top of all the walls, and fix the roof pieces in position; the roof should overlap the walls to make the eaves. Pipe or spread a little icing along the crest of the roof to hold the two pieces firmly together.

Once the house shape is made, decorate it with any candy or chocolate of your choice. Have fun!

*Chisato Nakamae*

## Advent Reflections

Christmas-tide, to the Christian, is the season which reminds us of the ‘self-emptying’ (kenosis) of Christ in Philippians 2 ....

*“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.*



...and more importantly, challenges us to do the same. “Fear not, behold I bring you good news of great joy” (*gaudium* in Latin) (Luke 2:10) and “Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to people of goodwill” (Luke 2:14), sang the angels, in some sense in double jubilation of Christmas and Easter. In the economy of salvation and Kingdom values, there is no other way to experience glory than through the Cross – of Christ, through whom we link our own crosses.

Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium* is very clear, “The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ’s cross, constantly invites us to rejoice” (#5). Let us this Christmas truly experience the joy that comes by emptying ourselves, like the little babe “wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger” (Luke 2:7).

During this month, let us daily take a step closer to the manger, with the prayer to the Sacred Heart on our lips, to make our heart like unto His. Let us resolve to empty ourselves of at least one aspect each day to become more like Jesus. Can we do this... something practical; let this not be an academic reading but the Spirit urging us on. I urge each one of us, including myself, to try this out.

Like Mary, let us not waste a single opportunity to also, this Christmas, “bring Jesus” to the world – a world hurting, hollow and hopeless. And in our celebration, let us not forget the poor; the Lord was born “poor”. *Evangelii Gaudium* (#197-201) challenges us, “God’s heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself “became poor” (2 Cor 8:9)...We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them...The poor person, when loved, “is esteemed as of great value”, and this is what makes the authentic option for the poor differ from any other ideology...This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor”. Poor here also represents the “poor in spirit” of Matthew 5:3.

Wishing you and yours the Joy / *Gaudium* of Christ overflowing in your life this Christmas into the New Year ahead!

*Karen Gomez*



## Christmas Around The World

Living in an international community can be a blessing in many ways, and here at Sacred Heart Cathedral, we have countless opportunities to get to know and familiarise ourselves with each other, our individual customs and cultures. Here's a glance at how our parishioners from two different countries celebrate Christmas.

### Joyeux Noel

In France, Christmas is a time for family and for generosity, marked by family reunions, gift giving and candy, Midnight Mass, and *Le Réveillon*. We are used to celebrating Christmas on December 24<sup>th</sup> after the Midnight Mass (which is rarely at midnight!) or on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December which is a public holiday.



**The Preparation :** We start to prepare for Christmas at the beginning of the Advent or usually around December 1<sup>st</sup>. The *Christmas tree* is the main decoration in homes, streets, stores, schools, offices, and factories. Another important aspect is the “crèche” or the crib as it is called in English, which is displayed in churches and in many homes. There are different kinds of cribs, one which is very popular in the Southeast is “La Crèche des Santons de Provence”: The “Santons de Provence” are small clay figurines, colorful, representing the nativity scene, the magi and the shepherds, as well as a series of small figures, depicting the inhabitants of a Provençal village and their traditional occupations. This little world, each with its gift for the baby Jesus, walks through a typical landscape with a hillock, a river with a bridge and a glade, to the stable, lit up by the star. In some families, the children have their own sheep and they progressively move it towards the stable as Christmas Day approaches.

**The Celebration :** Although fewer and fewer French attend the Midnight Mass, it is still an important part of Christmas for many families. It is often celebrated in the early evening rather than midnight for practical reasons. Another custom is for children to lay Baby Jesus in the “crèche” to depict his birth.

It is followed by a huge feast, called *Le Réveillon* (from the verb “réveiller”, to wake up or to revive). It is a festive meal, made up of Christmas turkey, seafood, “foie gras” and ending with the “bûche de Noël” (Yule log), a log-shaped cake made of chocolate and chestnuts. This log recalls the ancient tradition where we built a log fire in the early evening. In Provence, there is also a tradition called the Thirteen Desserts, in remembrance of Jesus and his twelve apostles comprising dry fruits, nuts et al. In most families, it is also time to open gifts. Other families wait for the next morning. The children hang their stockings in front of the fireplace, or under the tree, in the hope that “Père Noël” (Santa Claus) will stuff them with gifts, candy or fruits overnight. Kids are excited to discover their gifts on Christmas morning. People can also attend the morning mass. It is a quiet day in the city with every store or office closed. Families enjoy spending together at home around a long lunch. It is also time to think of others who are alone, in trouble or just far away. We send invitations or make phone calls to wish everyone a “Joyeux Noel.”



*Mathilde Franqueville*

### Feliz Navidad

My name is Natalia and I am one of the catechists at Sacred Heart Cathedral. My family is from Nicaragua but shortly after I was born, we immigrated to America and later to Canada. Canada is a melting pot of cultures; therefore my holiday tradition is quite unique.



Before Christmas, my family has always celebrated “La Purísima” which is a celebration of the Immaculate Conception. In Miami, because of the strong Hispanic influence, we would attend a lively celebration full of songs, food and games. In Canada, my grandmother has kept this tradition alive in our home. Each year, she prepares a colourfully decorated altar for Mother Mary. As a child, she would teach my sister and I prayers and songs in Spanish. We really enjoyed the upbeat and joyful feel of the prayers and songs which we still remember to this day.

Our Christmas family gathering is celebrated on Christmas Eve. As a family, we gather to eat amazing home cooked food with an influence from Canada, Nicaragua and Chile, which is where some of my family members are from. We usually eat Canadian turkey, mashed potatoes, Chilean empanadas, beet or celery salad, bread and pebre (spicy citrus sauce). For dessert, we usually have Nicaraguan tres leche (three milk cake) or flan (caramel custard cake).

After our late family dinner, it is time to open presents from under the Christmas tree and we would have to wait until midnight for our presents from “El Niño Dios” or baby Jesus, wishing our family members “Feliz Navidad”. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, our family gathers once again in the morning to eat leftovers and spend time together.

We gather once again as a family with a different mix of Canadian, Nicaraguan and Chilean influence to ring in the New Year. As a Chilean tradition, we eat a spoonful of lentils for prosperity and twelve grapes, one for each month of the year, which represents good fortune.

I feel blessed to have a unique Christmas tradition with my family in Canada. My husband is now part of this tradition and we hope to continue adding to our family's customs by sharing what we learn from other cultures while living abroad.

*Natalia Toruno Barr*

