

Materials for the St. Ignatius Church Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Sunday, June 14, 2026 at St. Joseph Hall

<Agenda>

1. Pastor's Address
Fr. Toshiaki KOSO, SJ
2. Associate Pastor's Addresses
Fr. Saturnino OCHOA, SJ
Fr. Kiyoshi SHIBATA, SJ
Fr. Bony JAMES, SJ
3. Activity Report
Yasunori SUZUKI, Former Chair of the Parish Council
4. Activity Plan
Yukari KAGE, Chair of the Parish Council
5. Q&A
6. Financial Report
Hisaki TANIGUCHI, Chair, Finance Committee
7. Q&A

※ The livestream will cover Items 1–5 only.

Greetings at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting

June 14, Following the 10:00 a.m. Mass

Toshiaki Koso

Pastor

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for taking the time to attend our 2026 Annual Parish Meeting. I would also like to extend my greetings to those who are joining us via YouTube. First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your continued commitment to our parish, for journeying together as a faith community, and for supporting our community, both spiritually and materially, throughout the year.

While the Holy Year 2025 is now behind us, but our journey as Pilgrims of Hope continues.

Here at St. Ignatius Church, during the past year we welcomed as many as 420 newly baptized members into our community, on the other hand, 120 members of our parish were called home to the Lord. Among them were our beloved former pastor, Fr. Hiroyuki Ikejiri, and Fr. Domenico Vitali. We also remember Fr. Teruo Awamoto, who dedicated himself to the OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) and Marriage Preparation programs, and Sr. Marcela Rosas Morales, who served faithfully at Centro Loyola.

In response to the incidents that occurred this past May, we will strengthen our security measures. Thank you for your concern and for keeping our parish in your prayers.

Over the past year, in response to the call of the Synod on Synodality (the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops), whose theme was “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission – Final Document” we began the process of developing a vision and pastoral plan for our parish, looking ahead to the next ten years.

The year 2036, ten years from now, will mark the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Kojimachi, the predecessor of St. Ignatius Church. The church was dedicated on March 22, 1936, and was later destroyed in the air raids of May 1945. As we look toward the 100th anniversary of our parish, we have been asking ourselves what kind of parish we hope St. Ignatius Church will be when that milestone arrives. To help shape this vision, the Kojimachi Church Preparatory Committee for the Centenary Plan was established last spring and together, we have prayed and engaged in spiritual conversations, discerning where our church has come from, where we are now, and where the Holy Spirit is calling us to go.

The Final Document of the Synod calls the Church community to discern together the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and active in the Holy Spirit, and to embark on “a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that will enable the Church to walk with all people and to radiate the light of Christ” (no. 28).

The Preparatory Committee compiled its Report and then handed over its work to the Kojimachi Church Centennial Planning Committee established in April of this year. The committee has adopted the same vision as this year's Church theme: “Journeying Together as One Community to Jesus”

As we respond to the changes in our times and circumstances, including the growing impact of AI, and draw upon the international diversity that is one of our parish's greatest gifts, let us grow ever more deeply united with Christ and with one another, transcending differences of language and nationality as we walk together in faith. Guided by the Holy Spirit, let us discern the future to which we are called: to become a Church that reaches beyond the community of St. Ignatius Church and walks together with all people, both in Japan and around the world. With hope, let us continue our pilgrimage journey together.

As we look ahead to the next ten years, let us work together to develop a pastoral plan in which the Holy Spirit is the true protagonist. I warmly invite your ideas, cooperation, and accompaniment as we continue to walk this path together.



Greetings at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting

Saturnino Ochoa, SJ

Looking Twelve Years Ahead: Reflecting on the Future of St. Ignatius Church

The number twelve holds special significance in both human culture and the biblical tradition. There are twelve months in a year, twelve hours in the day and twelve hours in the night, and twelve signs of the zodiac. In music as well, an octave—from one C to the next—is made up of twelve semitones. The Church itself is founded upon the Twelve Apostles.

At St. Ignatius Church, we also find this symbolism reflected in the twelve columns and the twelve stained-glass panels of our church building.

As we look ahead to the next twelve years, I believe that St. Ignatius Church will continue to grow as a leading Catholic center not only in Japan but throughout Asia. Its location in Yotsuya offers excellent accessibility and attracts people from many different backgrounds. Even now, Masses and pastoral ministries are conducted in multiple languages, fostering a vibrant and international faith community. In the years ahead, we can expect to welcome increasing numbers of international students, professionals, travelers, and visitors from across Asia. As a result, our parish community will become even more diverse and international, reflecting more fully the universality of the Catholic Church.

However, at the same time, there are also challenges. As people of different languages and cultures come together, the question arises: how can we maintain the unity of the community while embracing its diversity? Yet this is not a new challenge. In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, we find that even the early Church experienced tensions arising from differences in language and culture. From the very beginning, the Church has sought to preserve unity amid diversity. This remains our mission today: to build a community in which people from many backgrounds can pray, serve, and grow together in faith, while remaining one body in Christ.

It is unlikely that the number of priests and religious will increase significantly over the next twelve years. Precisely for this reason, it is essential that lay people be formed and empowered to take on leadership roles in carrying out the mission of the Church.

The coming twelve years will therefore present an important challenge: the formation of the laity and the fostering of a culture of collaboration among clergy, religious, and lay faithful. Through such cooperation, the Church will be better equipped to respond to the needs of the future.

As St. Ignatius Church celebrates its centennial, I hope it will be an open and welcoming Church that serves as a bridge connecting Japan, Asia, and the wider world—a community where people of diverse backgrounds pray, learn, and support one another in faith.

“In twelve years, I myself will be one hundred years old! I may not be here to witness the Church’s 100th anniversary, but many of you will. That is why we must begin preparing for it now.”

Annual Parish Meeting Current Activities

Kiyoshi Shibata, SJ

1. To ensure the smooth running of the liturgy and the daily life of the parish.

- On May 5, during the 7:00 a.m. Mass, an individual attempted to tamper with the donation box using tools. Since that incident, I have tried to monitor the church from the rear pews during the 7:00 a.m. Mass whenever possible.
- Regarding the incident at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on May 10, I was present, but my attention had been focused primarily on the possibility of difficulties during Holy Communion. The incident highlighted the need for broader planning and preventive measures, including security considerations. At the same time, I have become increasingly aware of the limits of what one person can reasonably oversee. Balancing responsibilities for the liturgy, the parish school, and unforeseen situations has become increasingly challenging, and I believe that additional support and shared responsibility are needed.

“My power is made perfect in weakness.” — 2 Corinthians 12:9

During a retreat for Jesuits in 2000, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini offered the following advice:

<Three Practical Recommendations for Facing Overwhelming Difficulties>

- ① To honestly accept our own weakness.
- ② To recognize our weakness as the very place where God's power is revealed. We are invited to contemplate how the glory of the Resurrection shines forth from the humiliation and suffering of the Cross.
- ③ To learn how to live with an awareness of our own weaknesses and the weaknesses of the Church, praying humbly before God and living in trust amid our weakness.

2. Requests from Schools and Religious Communities

I am often introduced as “Fr. Shibata from St. Ignatius Church” or “Fr. Shibata of the Society of Jesus.”

They trust St. Ignatius Church and the Jesuits. I therefore try not only to meet their expectations but, whenever possible, to exceed them.

In a sense, this is similar to the world of business: it is built on the accumulation of trust and a good reputation. My hope is that these encounters will encourage people to say, “I would like to visit the church again,” or, through the seeds planted in schools and other ministries, “I would like to receive baptism.”

It is ultimately a matter of building trust, one encounter at a time.

St. Ignatius Church is blessed with an excellent location and a favorable environment. We can make better use of these blessings, and I will continue to work creatively and diligently toward that goal.

As we are heading towards the 100th anniversary of our St. Ignatius church, it is an occasion to look back to the many blessings it received in the past; and a time to look forward with hope as well. As we know St. Ignatius community is a mix of various language groups and thus makes it perfect to be called “catholic”, especially in its true sense of the word, which is “universal” or “all-encompassing”. This “universal” or “all-encompassing” nature of the Catholic Church is truly manifested in our church as we are from many nations, cultures and language groups but united in one faith. The presence of these multicultural and multilingual communities in our church makes it a small replica of the universal Church itself.

While “worshiping together” may sound as a wonderful idea, in reality it also takes a lot of efforts to function as one international community. Having gathered from different cultures and characters, walking together as one community is not easy and it needs a lot of patience, beneficence and trust in each other.

One practical way to strengthen the relationship between various communities is to organize and execute parish events together. As we know every year the church conducts parish festival in October where various church communities come together from the planning level to the execution of the events. Beyond the planning and execution of events, what it really achieves is a sense of trust between each other, in spite of a myriad of differences among our parishioners.

While the Parish festival acts as a wonderful opportunity of trust-building for adults and elderly of the parish, we also have such bonding events for the young people and children as well. Every year in July, our parish celebrates Ignatian Youth Day as part of the celebration of the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, our patron saint. This offers the youth of the parish the opportunity to mingle and to get to know each other as they plan and execute the event every year.

Furthermore, from this year, we are also introducing a new program for the Sunday School children of various language groups. The name of the event is “Family Day” and it will take place on October 4th, Sunday this year. We hope that this event will bring together children of different communities and help them to go beyond their own cultural and language barriers. As we know children are the future of the church community and we hope that this event will help build a sense of belonging among the future generation of the church while they are still young.

The parish also conducts Living Rosary in May and October every year, where people of different nationalities join to recite the rosary in multiple languages. It should also be mentioned that other common events such as the annual church cleaning and setting up of Christmas crib(presepio) etc. are increasingly being represented by members from various language groups.

Let us continue to strive and pray that the church community may further strengthen its “universal” or “all-encompassing” character, the very nature of the Catholic Church.

Fr. Bony James, SJ