



*And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Apocalypse 21:5*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the famous Russian novelist, tells us that "a people that no longer remembers has lost its history and its soul." Our parish has both a long history and an old soul that is worth remembering and cherishing. We will be celebrating the 125th Anniversary of Holy Family in 2026. We can trace our official beginnings from the date of the dedication of the first church building on the 24th of February 1901. Though none of you would have been alive to witness that, most of you would still have tons of fond memories of this parish. We hope that the activities lined up for the next four years will help us to remember, review, and rejoice over the many blessings we as a community, have received from the Lord.

But there is also something else which must be done beyond looking to the past and focusing on the present. As much as we need to look back, recover and celebrate our history, this is also a time for renewal. As a Church, we are always called to grow, change, deepen, repent, convert, improve, and learn from our successes and failures in the pursuit of holiness and fidelity to our Lord Jesus Christ and the mission He has given us.

It is for this reason, that we would like to announce a five-year Pastoral Renewal Plan which will commence on the 1st of January 2023, on the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God.

We share this vision with you in the spirit of Synodality. This vision addresses four areas of potential growth in our parish, which is a response to the four main areas of concern identified in our parish Synodal process, namely: youth, formation, communication and evangelisation. We wish to approach this process of renewal by focusing on four areas of growth: our spiritual and prayer life, our understanding and living out of our faith, our community experience and the mission to evangelise.

## **1. Renewing Spirit**

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).*

The work of the Holy Spirit is at the heart of the Church's renewal. All programmes, structures and initiatives would be fruitless if they do not bring about the conversion of hearts and a deepening of faith. That is why there should be a two pronged approach in our initiative to bring about a spiritual renewal of our parish.

First, we need to foster a vibrant prayer life for individuals and the community through the promotion of devotions, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, recollections, retreats, Parish Renewal Experiences (PREs), Life in the Spirit Seminars.



Second, we must renew our reverence, love, adoration and devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, within and outside of Mass, for the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of Christian life. We must foster and restore the sense of the sacred, where God alone is glorified and man sanctified.

## **2. Renewing Faith**

*“The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”” (Luke 17:5)*

Our relationship with God is the absolute centre and purpose of faith. But how can we be in a relationship with God if we do not know Him? We must be catechised or re-catechised. Catechesis does not end with Sunday School. For this reason, the parish hopes to strengthen our Catechetical Ministry with the systematic training of catechists and set up and strengthen a formation ministry which can offer more catechetical programmes for both youth and adults, and especially for our leaders.

## **3. Renewing Community**

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).*

Unity provides us with the foundation for mission as Tertullian noted: “let people say of us: ‘see how they love one another.’” On the other hand, disunity puts people off and drives many away from the Church. We must acknowledge that our parish is a multicultural family made up of different language groups, people of different nationalities, the old and the young, long time and new members and a myriad of BECs and ministries. Our diversity should be celebrated, not resented. Synodality demands that we journey together instead of each individual or group taking their own path.

## **4. Renewing our ardour for Mission**

*“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11).*

“Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass.” [Evangeli Nuntiandi #14] Sharing our faith is an intrinsic duty of charity. Certain sectors within our parish would require new evangelisation and outreach - youth, campus students, BECs, migrants, homebound and families. For this reason, our formation and means of social communication should not just be focused on transmitting information but it must help us regain our confidence in the power of the Word of God to change lives and touch hearts.



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, to see a need for renewal, to commit ourselves to the work of renewal, to bring about the renewal of our parish and the world, we must humbly acknowledge our imperfections, our flaws, our weaknesses and our need for repentance and conversion. We cannot even begin to change the world for Christ, unless we allow Christ to change our hearts and conform them to His and the Father's will.

Our consolation is knowing that we are all "works in progress," not "finished products". What we sow now, others will reap. Let us ask the Lord to sustain us as we build and grow this parish towards Him and to increase our faith as we work. Like St Paul, we can be "confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

Wishing all of you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Your loving shepherds,

Reverend Fr Michael Chua  
Reverend Fr Philip Chua  
Reverend Fr Bonaventure Rayappan

Solemnity of the Holy Family  
30th December 2022