

FASTING BEFORE COMMUNION

Growing up, we are often told that we have to fast before taking communion. Sometimes, we ask, "Why do we have to?" The answer lies in a rule written in the Catholic Book of Canon Law 9519 verse 1 and 3: Everyone who has received First Communion and will receive Holy Eucharist should not eat or drink at least an hour before communion. However, this rule excludes drinking pure water and medicine, and is not mandatory for elderly people and those who are sick. Furthermore, an hour is only a guideline to help us set the timing - people often misunderstand this law as a mandate to fast an hour before the mass, instead of an hour before communion.

The purpose of this tradition is to prepare us in receiving God's presence in an appropriate way. We are to supremely receive the presence of the Lord's body by having it enter our mouth before all foods and drinks, symbolizing that it is the foremost nourishment for our soul. People are expected to have genuine willingness to prepare their spirit through this fasting. If a pregnant woman, a sick person, and others who are in special conditions are capable of fasting an hour before communion, they are encouraged to do so. Apart from preparing ourselves, this also signifies our expression of love for Jesus Christ, our God.

By: Arvin Hartanto



For many Jakartans, the morning of Sunday November 10th was just like any other Sunday. The sun was shining, the sky was clear, and many of the city's residents were out for a stroll or a bike ride on the closed-for-cars Jalan Jenderal Sudirman. But for a few dozen CFJ volunteers, this Heron's Day was a special day, for they were to participate in the citywide Clean Up Jakarta Day (CUJD)—an initiative organized by Jakarta Expats—by cleaning the streets along Bendungan Hillr Raya.

Our valiant young volunteers started their activities early at 6:30 am, meeting at the intersection of Jalan Sudirman and Bendungan Hillr Raya. After receiving their CUJD shirts, rubber gloves, and sugar sacks from CFJ CUJD coordinator Sabrina Joseph, they ventured forth in groups of four to collect rubbish strewn across the streets of the area, separating the trash into recyclable and non-recyclable piles. It was not an easy task, as the area around Benhil Market was littered with wet trash, which prompted volunteer Martin Sulistio to buy a set of brooms to aid in the cleanup. Leaders Sabrina Joseph and

Nicholas Pudjadi coordinated the day's activity by going up and down the road on a bemo, providing volunteers with extra sugar sacks and rubber gloves.

During the clean-up trek from the Bendungan Hillr market to Mintoharjo Hospital, CFJ volunteers encountered many well-wishers, ranging from local citizens praising the youth's initiative, to street sweepers who were appreciative for the extra hand. By 8:30 am, all the volunteers had all reached the end point at Mintoharjo Hospital, collecting a total of 20 sugar sacks full of rubbish. The day's activity was closed by a group breakfast at Coedkoop Café followed by weekly mass at Gereja Kristus Raja. While the CFJ CUJD volunteers know that leaving the Benhil area spotless would be an insurmountable problem, they can be secure in the knowledge that their efforts did not go unnoticed and unappreciated. Well done, CFJ CUJD volunteers! (CUJD Photos by Justine Widjaja).

By: Dennis Widjaja

CLEAN STREETS, CLEAN SOULS



HOW GOD HEALED ME

Only six months ago, I was an avid church-hopper—I was not a devout Catholic by any means, but when I read about CFJ in the Jakarta Globe, my interest was piqued and I joined the CFJ Choir. I found a place to actively serve the Lord, but I still felt like something was amiss in my walk with God. This feeling changed on Sunday October 20th 2013, when I sang as part of the CFJ Choir during the mass and adoration by Father Kevin Scallion and Sister Brieger McKenna held at Gereja Kristus Raja.

About two years ago, I had surgery on my sinus. Unfortunately, what had been intended as a standard procedure left me with a side effect that would deprive me of my sense of smell, resulting in a rare condition called anosmia. All the things I loved to smell became a thing of the past, with my sense of smell being a mere fraction of what it once was. I never gave up trying to be able to smell better and searched for ways to improve my sense of smell. However, nothing ever seemed to help.

It was only after I attended the healing mass and adoration by Father Kevin and Sister Brieger that my sense of smell started to slowly come back. While I was singing in the choir, I recall praying fervently and sincerely, begging the Lord to allow me to smell once again. I was constantly reminded of Matthew 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" I knew the Lord would take care of me.

Over the next few days, I was surprised to gradually grow more sensitive to the smell of my mom's cooking, the smell of my dog, and the smell of soap in the bathroom. I had never won a lottery before, but the feeling felt a lot better than striking the lottery.

That Sunday evening was also the first ever Rosary prayer I had with my fellow CFJ brothers and sisters, and I have been praying the Rosary everyday ever since. It has become my secret weapon in times of doubt and fear and search for protection.

I am extremely grateful to the Lord for enabling me to smell all the different aromas that I had been missing for the past two years. I have cultivated an unusual habit of smelling my food because I know how devastating it is not to be able to smell anything. In June, I was the epitome of a lost soul. But over the past few months, the Lord has guided me to CFJ, put me in the Choir, and led me to the healing session where my anosmia would be healed. What the whole experience has taught me is the importance of unwavering faith. Have faith, do good, and serve the Lord. Then in its own time, great things will unfold in mysterious ways.

By: Michael Alinskie



What Catholics Need to Know About THE CHRISTMAS CYCLE

1. We Prepare. Then We Celebrate.
The Catholic Church traditionally sets aside time for penance before great feasts. Just as Easter has the season of Lent, Christmas has the penitential season of anticipation in the form of Advent, which always begins four Sundays before Christmas.

The season of Advent, which is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," is a time to reflect on the coming of the Son of God to the world. This is evident through the liturgical readings during Advent, with the first week devoted to the second coming of the Christ, the second and third week focusing on John the Baptist, and the fourth Sunday discussing events that immediately preceded Jesus' birth.

2. We Mark the Beginning of a New Liturgical Year.
"For everything there is a season, and a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what has been planted. A time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance..." Ecclesiastes 3:1-4.

Similarly, the Catholic Church believes that there is a time for fasting, a time for preparing, and a time for feasting and celebrating. The liturgical calendar regulates these different times into seasons in the Church. A new year then begins with Advent season, when we prepare ourselves for the second coming of Christ by reflecting on the joyous expectancy of His birth.

3. We Light the Advent Candles.
During Advent season, the Church upholds its long-standing tradition of lighting an Advent candle every Sunday. The candles are traditionally arranged in a wreath, which includes three purple candles and one pink candle, one for each week of Advent. The progressive lighting of the Advent candles symbolizes the hope and expectancy of the birth of our Lord and the anticipation for His second coming.

The color purple is the color most associated with Advent as it represents repentance. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday, also called the Gaudete Sunday, to represent the joy that we have for reaching the midpoint of Advent and getting closer to Christmas.

4. We Celebrate a Christmas Season, Not a Christmas Day.
For Catholics, Christmas is not just a single day, but an extended liturgical season of joy and celebration. The Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve starts off the Christmas season, with the end being marked by the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January (the Christmas season ends on January 12, this liturgical year). Priests are traditionally dressed in celebrative white for this festive season.

5. We Attend the Christmas Mass.
The Christmas Mass is a holy day of obligation in the Catholic Church, and the Church has several special liturgies that are celebrated on the day. First, there is the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve. The readings of Vigil Masses are different from those of the feasts themselves, but still remain closely linked to them.

The Christmas Eve Mass, which usually begins at midnight, has its roots in the traditional belief that Christ was born at midnight. Furthermore, having it at midnight expresses the symbolic representation of the darkness on which the birth of Christ shed great light upon. At the Midnight Mass, Catholics usually perform the Proclamation of the Birth of Christ, where there is a recreation of the Nativity scene with the Holy Family.

The second Mass of Christmas Day occurs at dawn. This Mass is sometimes called the Shepherds' Mass as it represents the coyness of the shepherds to go to the crib of baby Jesus to receive His gift of light. Lastly, there is the Mass of the Day, which focuses on the divinity of the Child born in Bethlehem.

6. We Place Emphasis on Family.
During the Advent and Christmas seasons, the Catholic Church traditionally focuses on the concept of family. This year, the Jakarta Archdiocese set the Advent theme of "Growing in Nazareth." Just like the Holy Family in Nazareth, Catholic families are advised to grow in spirituality as a family, not only as an individual. The family should strive to grow in faith, hope, love, and togetherness during this season of preparation.

By: Janice Winata