



Home at Last!

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After almost 2 years of being a parish without our own Church, on March 2 we finally returned home to our address on Granville Avenue.

During the last few weeks leading up to our return home, many parishioners came out to help get things ready for the big day. We had several items in storage in the old garage at the corner of our property, in the Rectory, at the warehouse in Delta, and even in parishioners' homes. All these things had to be moved into our new building and many people came out and carried things, cleaned things, and generally helped to organize all our old belongings. Those who came out worked hard, but the work was fun; and the food was good too!



During those weekend work we were also able to recapture some of the sense of community that had dwindled during our time away from 'home'. It was good to be back together as one community, working for a common cause – the opening of our new Church.

Finally the opening weekend arrived. On the Friday and Saturday the activities reached almost a fever pitch. There were people coming and going everywhere – both contractors and parishioners alike. Everywhere you looked – or listened, things were going on: decorating, sound system testing, choir practices, ushers meeting, room set-ups, cleaning, and general finishing touches everywhere.

Then it was Sunday, the day we'd been anticipating for 22 months – the Dedication of our Church. We were prepared for a crowd: we had seats for around 850 people and standing room for several more, 900 programs, and mountains of food. Then they started to come...and come and come and come. We ran out of programs, we ran out of seats, we packed people into the foyer, the hallways, and the parish hall. Thank goodness for closed circuit TV and a sound system throughout the whole building! No matter where you were, even if you couldn't see what was going on, you could hear it.

By all accounts, the mass was beautiful. The choirs outdid themselves and truly brought a taste of heaven down to

those of us who were there. The Archbishop gave a beautiful homily, likening our time 'in exile' to the wanderings of the

Hebrew people in the desert – good thing we didn't have to wait 40 years to return home! As one of the ushers who was stationed on the overflow side in the parish hall, I didn't have the opportunity really see much of what was going on in the mass itself. My view was more of the people who came to celebrate this day with us. Most of these people couldn't see much more than I could and they were

standing around in the parish hall and in the hallway trying to position themselves so they could at least see a bit of the mass on the TV. What really struck me, though, was the atmosphere of cheerfulness and generosity. We were all there to celebrate and no one was going to let anything get in the way of their enjoyment of the day.

After 2 hours, the mass was ended; the altar had been consecrated and every room in our Church building had been blessed. Now it was party time! Looking around at the crowd, some people put estimates on the number present as high as 1500. Would there be enough for everyone to eat? The Filipino and Chinese communities had brought all sorts of goodies for us to nibble on and the ladies of the CWL were busy throughout the reception cooking up batches of Dim Sum in our beautiful, new kitchen. At the end of it all, everyone had eaten their fill and there was still food left over – it was almost like the story of the loaves and fishes in the Bible!

All the festivities are over now and we are settling into a routine in the new Church. For the English speaking mass community it has been very heartening to see the return of many of our 'old' parishioners; the ones who were not able to join us at our evening masses at St. Joseph the Worker. Also exciting is seeing all the new faces of the people who have come to join us for our Sunday mass. Judging by the activity at the Parish Info Counter in between masses, it looks like the Cantonese language masses are enjoying an influx of new parishioners as well.

As the 'oldtimers' of the parish, let us be quick to extend the hand of friendship to those who come through our doors; living out the message Jesus gave us in Matthew 25:35: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." God Bless!