

# Mission Intention

## JANUARY

2020 - 2021

Education for  
Community Life

Country Focus: Singapore

### Pope Francis' January Prayer Intention

May the Lord help us live in friendship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, and pray for one another.

Singapore is one of the world's most populated islands. The country's main 30-mile island, and its 62 smaller, surrounding islands, are home to more than 5 million people.

Although it did not become an independent nation until 1965, Singapore was a trading location for centuries and has since become a global financial center. Because of this history as a trading hub, Singapore has a diverse population. This diversity has also resulted in it being home to many different religions. In fact, Singapore is the most religiously diverse country in the world (2012 report by the Pew Research Center). Major religions practiced by its citizens include Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism. Some citizens also practice folk or traditional religions.

There are about 360,000 Catholics in

Singapore. Its one archdiocese, the Archdiocese of Singapore, has 32 parishes spread throughout the country. The Archdiocese of Singapore provides spiritual and pastoral care for the country's Catholics and those in need, and works to promote peace, unity and justice in Singapore. Let us pray for the Church in Singapore, that it may be a beacon of Christ's light by living in friendship with those of other religions.



### Saint Spotlight: Saint John the Apostle



This month, the Holy Father asks us to "live in friendship" with those of other religions. An example of the friendship Pope Francis is calling us to can be found in the life of Saint John the Apostle.

Saint John the Apostle was one of the first disciples called by Jesus. Saint John the Apostle, along with his brother James, were in a fishing boat when Jesus called them to be his disciples. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the brothers immediately left their boat, and their father, and spent the rest of their lives following Jesus.

The Gospels mention many examples of the friendship between Saint John the Apostle and Jesus. He was one of only three disciples to be with Jesus at important moments in Jesus' ministry: the Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the Garden of Gethsemane on the night Jesus was betrayed. Saint John the Apostle was also the only Apostle present at Jesus' crucifixion, and it was to him that Jesus entrusted the care of his mother, Mary.

After Jesus' Death and Resurrection, Saint John the Apostle continued his friend's ministry. He spent the rest of his life preaching the Good News. He also has been considered the author of the Fourth Gospel, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, and the Book of Revelation.

We remember Saint John the Apostle each year on his feast day, December 27. Let us look to Saint John the Apostle as an example of the friendship we are called to offer all humankind, regardless of their religion.



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### God's Word for Mission

*"I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask Him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another" (John 15:15-17).*

*"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one" (John 17:20-21).*

# Ecumenism



One of the ways we can live in friendship with people of other Christian denominations is through ecumenism. From the Greek word “oikoumene,” which means “the whole inhabited world,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) teaches that ecumenism is “the promotion of cooperation and unity among Christians” ([usccb.org/committees/ecumenical-interreligious-affairs/ecumenical](http://usccb.org/committees/ecumenical-interreligious-affairs/ecumenical)). The USCCB goes on to explain that the Church’s commitment to ecumenism is based on John 17:21, “That they may all be one,” a prayer Jesus said during his Passion. The Church therefore works toward unity between other Christian denominations in faithfulness to this prayer made by Jesus.

The Catholic Church officially began its work in ecumenism at the Second Vatican Council when Pope John XXIII formed the Secretariat for

Promoting Christian Unity in 1960. Since then, the Church has become involved in more than a dozen dialogues with other Christian denominations, working to build friendship that leads to unity.

Friendship is an important component of ecumenism. Friendship helps us build the trust that allows us to know one another, listen to one another, and communicate with one another. This trust, based in friendship, lets us more easily share our beliefs and values with those of other Christian denominations in the spirit of dialogue we have been called to by Pope Francis. In this month’s video, we will learn more about the Church’s work through ecumenism. As you watch the video, think about the relationship between friendship and ecumenism. How does building friendships with Christians of other denominations help us answer the call to bear witness to Christ?

## Why Be Ecumenical? [Click Here>>](#)

1. Why is it important to live in friendship with members of other religions and Christian denominations?
2. How do ecumenical relationships reflect Christ’s love?
3. What are some examples of qualities of a good friendship?
4. How can you be a friend to all in your community?



## Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray for the Church in Singapore, that they may continue to be an example of Christ to their fellow citizens.
- ✚ Let us pray that we might receive the friendship offered by Christ and share it with all those we meet.
- ✚ Let us pray that those of all religions may live together in peace and friendship.
- ✚ Let us pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church’s work toward ecumenism.

## Daily Offering

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. As Jesus broke bread and shared the cup with his friends, help us grow together in closer communion. May we follow the example of Saint John the Apostle and the early Christians and continue to build bridges of compassion, unity and peace. Amen.