

The Catholic Hub

Building The Archdiocese's Spiritual Oasis



A preview of the future hub of the Catholic community in Singapore

The visuals of the Catholic Hub are artist's impressions and may change.

January 2023

Our Archbishop's Vision for the Hub



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our Archdiocese has been working to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church. In sharing the Good News, we are bringing the hope and love of Christ to vast numbers of people.

Within our Church today, however, there is currently no premises large enough for our organisations and communities to hold their activities on a large scale. After much study, we concluded that the Church's largest freehold site at 49 Upper Thomson Road could optimally be used to house major archdiocesan organisations, a convention centre with overnight retreat facilities, a home for senior clergy – and more for the long term needs of the Church.

Beyond physical infrastructure, such a Catholic Hub can bring about a greater depth of communion. The facilities and organisations located there will enable collaboration for a more effective witnessing of the Gospel to the people of Singapore and reap economies of scale. Catholics of all ages can gather to benefit from different programmes within one venue.

In recognition of the site's rich history, several existing buildings have been identified for conservation. With this, a heritage centre is planned in one of them to showcase the seminal work of the Catholic community these past 200 years, reach out to the broader community and form future generations of disciples.

This vision for the Hub is the result of years of discernment. I am deeply grateful to the building committee, project consultants and archdiocesan organisations who have been part of the development of this project. Once completed, we hope it will be an icon of communion in mission, bringing together clergy and laity, working together to renew and strengthen the evangelising and missionary spirit of the Church in Singapore.

We trust that God, who has guided us through the years, will continue to bless and direct the development of the Catholic Hub. May it be a place of God-encounter for all who come to serve and worship here.

May God bless you.

Cardinal William Goh
Archbishop of Singapore

Overview of the Catholic Hub

Located in the heart of Singapore and surrounded by the lushness of MacRitchie Reservoir, the future Catholic Hub at 49 Upper Thomson Road will serve the long-term needs of our Church. Sited on the Church's largest freehold property in Singapore, it will have a total gross floor area of 46,100 m², and will be developed in three phases. Detailed planning has begun on Phase 1. St Theresa's Home, currently located there and run by Catholic Welfare Services, will move to improved facilities before Phase 2 begins.

Since 2015, the building committee under the Archdiocesan Land and Properties Singapore (ALPS) has consulted potential users on their needs and engaged the authorities on design and construction plans, including during the 18-month delay while the government studied the environmental impact of the MRT Cross Island Line.

As a large shared resource, the Catholic Hub ensures that organisations, parishes and other Church groups using it as a venue for activities can focus on their ministries and fuel the growth of the Church through a wider outreach. Key archdiocesan organisations will be relocated here, strengthening their existing collaborations to serve the community better, with the support of amenities such as a configurable multi-purpose hall and retreat facilities.

Designed with Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* in mind, the Catholic Hub will be interspersed with greenery and several themed gardens, providing conducive areas for prayer and reminding us of our oneness with all creation. These key features, expected to be completed in Phase 1, are presented in this booklet.

Also briefly covered are plans for Phases 2 and 3. Several existing St Theresa's Home buildings have been identified for conservation to preserve the historical significance of the site, dating as far back as 1937 when the Little Sisters of the Poor ran Singapore's first home for the aged and destitute. To help Singaporeans appreciate our faith's enduring legacy, there are plans for a heritage centre in one of these conserved buildings. In addition, a residence for senior clergy will ensure that our priests can retire with comfort and grace, yet still continue to exercise their ministry for those who come to the Catholic Hub.

As one Body of Christ, let us look forward to the completion of the Catholic Hub that will provide restoration and renewal.



An Icon of Communion in Mission

The size and central location of the Catholic Hub make it an ideal site for spiritual programmes, drawing people from across the island. Designed to be inclusive, the Catholic Hub will have, the Catholic Hub will have quiet places for those who seek solitude, areas for community building and deep conversations, as well as facilities for worship and events.

Development of this project will be done in three phases. When completed, the Catholic Hub will have:

- Prayer Gardens • Multi-Purpose Hall •
- Retreat Facilities and Accommodation •
- Office Space for Archdiocesan Organisations •
- Dining Facilities • Meeting Rooms •
- Residence for Senior Priests • Heritage Centre •

and much more.



An Icon of Communion in Mission

God Inspires



View of Phase 1 of the Catholic Hub development

Prayer is the essence of our relationship with God. God speaks to us through His Holy Spirit in ways we cannot imagine. In 1 Kings 19:11-12, we are told that the prophet Elijah found God not in a show of strength but in a gentle breeze.

A calm and peaceful environment helps us to pray, though this can be hard to come by in our daily lives. Only in the absence of distractions can we be still and attentive to His constant presence, and re-centre our lives on Him.

Upon completion of Phase 1, the Catholic Hub will have a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces dedicated to prayer and contemplation for all who seek Him. These include various chapels, courtyards, and gardens that have been deliberately located away, and acoustically isolated, from the more active and bustling sections of the Catholic Hub.



An Icon of Communion in Mission

God *Inspires*



Marian Courtyard

Designed with group sharings and personal journalling in mind, this courtyard features a grotto dedicated to Mother Mary. It provides ample bench space, shaded by a canopy of trees.

Way of Jesus Garden

With a winding path through a lush, rolling riverine landscape, a central lawn will be surrounded by the 14 sets of statues for Stations of the Cross devotions.



Rosary Garden

Lined with benches, the landscape is designed for intimate individual or small group prayer, yet has a central area that allows large groups to pray the rosary together, or even celebrate Mass.



God *Inspires*



Psalms Chapel

Located on the roof terrace of the Catholic Hub, this pavilion chapel is screened from the surrounding gardens with greenery, making it ideal for silent contemplation.



Divine Mercy Courtyard

Spread throughout the grounds of this courtyard will be red and white rays that draw us towards the Divine Mercy icon.

Adoration Chapel

The Adoration Chapel will welcome all who are looking to spend quiet time in spiritual devotion or to simply be in the Sacred Presence of Jesus. With controlled entry after office hours, worshippers can access it safely, 24 hours a day.



God Provides

Dining Hall

Crucial for the smooth running of retreats, the Dining Hall can seat up to 500 people. Located right next to the Multi-Purpose Hall, it can also be set up as a pre-function area for larger events. Other, smaller dining rooms and a kitchen cater to the ancillary needs of events and meetings.

Retreats are vital to ongoing spiritual growth. To reconnect with our loving Father, we need to step back from everyday life, for “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Whether it is a personal, silent retreat or one with our family or community, we discern how God speaks to us directly and through the people and situations in our lives. Through these encounters, we are empowered to serve the Church and society.

A significant amount of space has thus been set aside for retreats in Phase 1, including different types of accommodation. Room interiors will be fitted out simply, in an almost monastic design, and will give retreatants contemplative views of the treetops of MacRitchie Reservoir.

Similarly, as the Bethany East Clergy Residence has limited capacity, the Catholic Hub will provide a larger residence for senior clergy in a later phase.



God Provides



En-suite Retreat Rooms

In another wing, closer to MacRitchie Reservoir where it is quieter, there will be rooms with en-suite bathrooms.

Youth Retreat Rooms

The residences for youths will be designed like a hostel. There will be communal areas for fellowship and sharing, where they can simply enjoy forming communities.



Residence for Senior Clergy (Phase 2)

As our clergy near retirement, they will need a suitable home after a lifetime of dedicated service. Plans are underway for an elderly-friendly residence within the Catholic Hub that will provide them the necessary care and support in their old age for them to continue actively participating in the life of the Church.



God Unites

Jesus our Saviour has united us all under His sovereignty. We come together as many parts of His Body (1 Cor 12:12), with Him as the Head of the universal Church (Colossians 1:18).

We in Singapore are blessed with many Catholic organisations, each with its particular charisms and unique individuals who labour for God in their respective mission fields. Many of these organisations are dispersed across the island, and may find it challenging to rent affordable venues for their events. The Catholic Hub allows these organisations to enjoy economies of scale and close collaboration. In addition, there are also plans to site a heritage centre for the archdiocese within one of the conserved buildings of the current St Theresa's Home.

On a spiritual level, the Catholic Hub creates an opportunity for synergy, beyond what is already taking place today, arising from concerted collaboration between archdiocesan organisations, parishes and groups – all working in unison to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church.

Arrival Plaza

Naturally ventilated, those who come to the Catholic Hub will find it open and welcoming.



An Icon of Communion in Mission

God *Unites*



Co-working Space

Meetings are just one way that archdiocesan organisations can come together to collaborate on programmes and initiatives. This co-working space can simulate “living” together as one community, one family, working side-by-side to grow the Body of Christ.



Multi-Purpose Hall

Equipped with retractable seats and moveable partitions, this spacious hall can be reconfigured for a wide range of activities held by different Church organisations. It can support up to 2,000 individuals for a Mass, rally, conference, or even a banquet. With sound dampeners, it can alternatively hold concurrent smaller events of up to 500 individuals within each partitioned section.

Heritage Centre (Phases 2, 3)

In recognising and preserving our past, the planned heritage centre can facilitate the faithful's collective memory of the love and sacrifice of our predecessors. This can galvanise us to live our faith more authentically and continue Christ's mission here in Singapore and around the world.



The Little Sisters of the Poor Home (today's St Theresa's Home under Catholic Welfare Services' purview) in the 1940s. Plans have been made to conserve various structures and buildings. *Photos: Chancery Archives*

Our community looks forward to the Catholic Hub ...

Two hundred years of the Catholic Church's presence in Singapore have contributed much to the growth and development of our society. The Catholic Church in living out her mission strived to address the social needs from a colonial outpost to a modern metropolis. The heritage centre at the Catholic Hub aims to preserve the memories of many sacrifices of people who have contributed to many of its present institutions. In retelling and preserving some of this history, it aims to inspire future generations of Catholics and Singaporeans to assume the mantle from their predecessors to chart a way forward to build God's Kingdom on this tropical island.

- Fr John-Paul Tan OFM

Set within the Catholic Hub, it is envisioned that a home is available for clergy and religious in their retirement years to be cared for and offer ongoing opportunities for continued engagement with the Catholic faithful. This village within a village aims to offer cross generational opportunities for witness and ministry to a Church that is built upon the dignity of all: child, youth, adult, seniors and the sick.

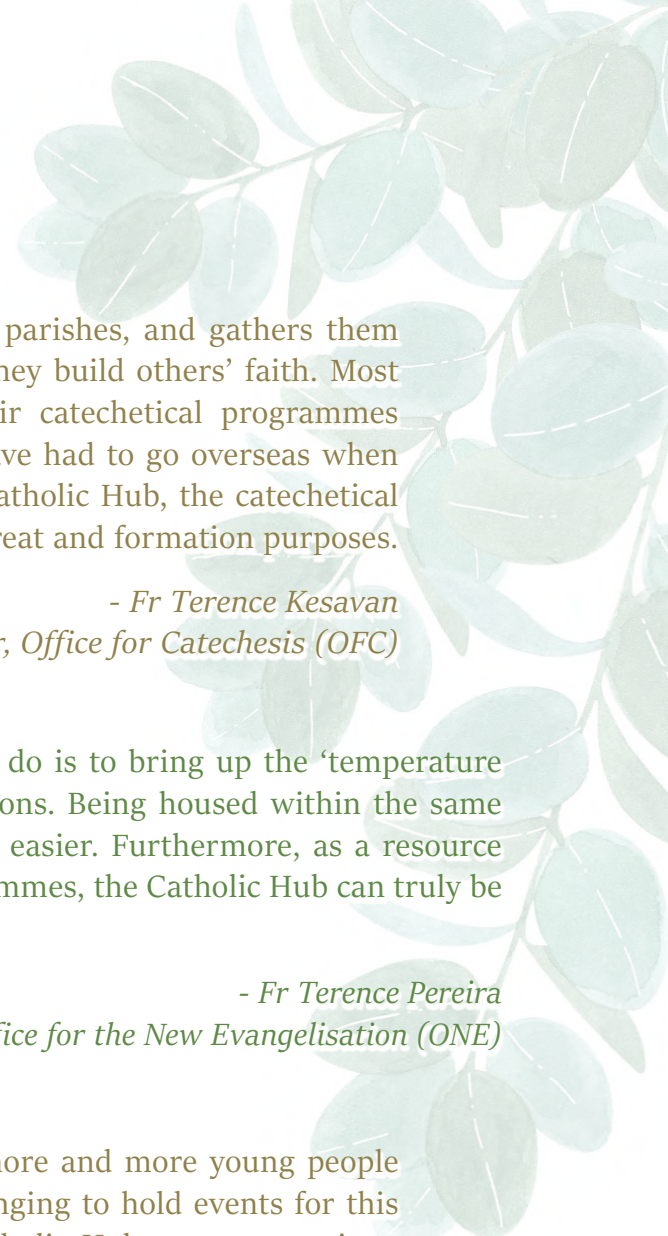
*- Fr Peter Tan
Clergy Welfare Committee*

The Catholic Hub will be a valuable pastoral and evangelistic resource for all parishes, religious communities and archdiocesan organisations. With diverse ecclesial entities working alongside each other maximizing the use of various retreat facilities, there is great hope that the Church can experience stronger communion as one Body of Christ.

*- Fr Henry Siew
Spiritual Director, Archdiocesan Commission for Apostolate of Mandarin-speaking (ACAMS)*

The Catholic Hub is going to be an ideal green haven for anyone to connect with God in the wonders of Creation. It will allow them to encounter and deepen their faith and love for Christ in a prayerful atmosphere. With the different prayer spaces, gardens and chapels, it will be a rich resource for Catholics and friends to avail themselves of this new iconic space so close to nature. Indeed, learning to care for each other and for God's Creation, will be brought one more step closer to home as advocated by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*.

*- Fr Colin Tan SJ
Spiritual Director for the Green Ministry of St Ignatius Church*



OFC conducts courses all year for catechists across the parishes, and gathers them for an annual retreat to strengthen their faith even as they build others' faith. Most parishes also hold camps and retreats as part of their catechetical programmes (Children, Youth and Adults undergoing RCIA); some have had to go overseas when space is an issue. With the beauty and serenity of the Catholic Hub, the catechetical community can look forward to using its facilities for retreat and formation purposes.

*- Fr Terence Kesavan
Catechetical Director, Office for Catechesis (OFC)*

One of the most crucial things that ONE aims to do is to bring up the 'temperature of evangelisation' in all ministries and organisations. Being housed within the same physical space will make such collaboration a lot easier. Furthermore, as a resource centre where people benefit from different programmes, the Catholic Hub can truly be a hub for the Church and for generations to come.

*- Fr Terence Pereira
Episcopal Vicar for the New Evangelisation, Office for the New Evangelisation (ONE)*

By the grace of God, we have been witnessing among more and more young people a hunger and thirst for God, yet it is increasingly challenging to hold events for this growing number at our current premises. With the Catholic Hub, we can continue to nourish and minister to young Catholics and non-Catholics alike in a new home with improved structures but with the same spirit of communion and witnessing. We look forward to many more young people's lives being changed and gathered into the Lord's sheepfold at the Catholic Hub.

*- Fr Jude David and Fr Brian D'Souza
Chaplains, Office for Young People (OYP)*

Whilst the current CSC premises holds a very dear place in the hearts of members, our outreach is limited. For iconic programmes like the Conversion Experience Retreat (CER), or YouthCER, where many have encountered the Lord in a very personal way, we only have capacity for 130 retreatants. The Catholic Hub presents a great opportunity to meet the needs of many more who are seeking God, and for communities to be continuously formed on our faith journey.

*- Jerome Chang
Board of Directors, Catholic Spirituality Centre (CSC)*

Our community looks forward to the Catholic Hub ...

The Catholic Hub would be an excellent place for families to grow in faith together and spend quality time with one another. They can do so not just with their own families but with other families too. For example, parents with young children will be able to come here for family retreats and benefit from the beautiful accommodation as well as interact and exchange ideas with fellow parents attending the same programmes.

- Kevin Kwek

Chairman, Catholic Family Life (CFL)

As St Theresa's Home moves to better premises with amenities befitting a modern nursing home, we are happy that the old buildings we are currently occupying will be conserved and given a new lease of life to become part of the Catholic Hub.

- Michael Thio

Chairman, Catholic Welfare Services (CWS)

We believe that the Catholic Hub will become a place of encounter, like Emmaus: a place we come to when we are overwhelmed, where we can encounter the Risen Lord and return home filled with the Holy Spirit, rejuvenated and strengthened to fulfill the dream our Creator had for each one of us when He sent us into this world.

- Jayanath Perera

Coordinator, Singapore Archdiocesan Catholic Charismatic Renewal (SACCRE)

Over the centuries and till the present time, Our Blessed Mother has constantly reminded us to turn away from sin and to repent and be reconciled with her Son by living out the Gospel. Here, at the Catholic Hub, the faithful can pray and meditate at the Rosary Garden and the Marian Courtyard. Let us continue to pray with Our Blessed Mother, asking her to guide us closer to her Son and live out faithfully our vocation to be “missionary disciples”, just like Mary who made herself a pilgrim of the Gospel, always united to Her Son.

- Okkie Tanudpradja

President, The Legion of Mary Singapore Senatus

Marriage Encounter Weekends have benefited 5,000 couples over more than four decades. However, we have been constrained because of a lack of space at our present location. With Divine Providence through the future Catholic Hub, we are excited that ME will have the facilities to continue to strengthen marriages and build upon our Church.

- Anthony & Helen Low

National Ecclesial Team Couple, Worldwide Marriage Encounter Singapore



“We hope the Catholic Hub will be
an icon of communion in mission,
bringing together clergy and laity,
working together to renew and strengthen
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of the Church in Singapore.”

Cardinal William Goh





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