

First Solemn Mass of Fr Damien Lim in Singapore

On Saturday 21st of January, at 10.00 in the morning, Fr Damien Lim celebrated his first solemn Mass in Singapore, attended by a few hundred of his friends and relatives in a joyful and festive atmosphere.

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It was a historical event, as Fr Damien is the first Singaporean member of Opus Dei ordained to the

priesthood. The Mass took place in Blessed Sacrament Church, the same parish where many years back he was baptized when he was still a university student.

Many years have passed now, and it has been a long and exciting personal journey. He earned his Engineering Degree in Singapore and his MBA in Spain before leaving for Taiwan in 2003, where he developed his professional skills as an engineer, and collaborated in the apostolate organised by Opus Dei there. A few years later, in 2007, he moved to Rome, where he studied Theology in the University of the Holy Cross. He was ordained to the priesthood in May 2011, and spent a few months in Barcelona, Spain. Finally, the time came for him to fly back to Singapore and celebrate with great joy his first solemn Mass here.

The parish priest of Blessed Sacrament Church, Fr Anthony Hutjes, introduced Fr Damien to the congregation at the beginning of the Mass. The homily was preached by Fr Avelino Marin, Vicar of Opus Dei in Southeast Asia. Fr Marin began his words saying that “in this kind of Masses, the preacher has to be careful not to say all the time how good the new priest is; however, I hope Fr Damien will forgive me if I do it a little”. And he gave some details of Fr Damien’s background, including his conversion to the Catholic Faith thanks to a National Service friend of his brother who was keen to share his faith with others. After his brother’s conversion, several members of the family followed his footsteps, including the future Fr Damien Then. Fr Marin highlighted the great dignity of the priesthood in its service to all souls, and encouraged the congregation to benefit more

from the treasures of grace that we can receive from the Sacraments, thanks to the mediation of the priests. He finally encouraged everybody, especially the young people, to be generous in responding to God's calling.

Towards the end of the celebration, Fr Damien addressed a few words to the audience, thanking everyone for their help and prayers. With particular affection he referred to his deceased father, who was baptized in the last few days of his life, and to his mother and siblings, present in the ceremony, to whom, he said "I owe so much". He also shared some reflections on the new mission that he is now fulfilling for the Church. "As a priest, I am a breadwinner in a literal sense of the word. I have to give bread to the children of God". He also thanked the many people who had collaborated in the celebration, for instance the choir of

Holy Spirit Church. And he concluded with a very special petition: “Please pray that we priests will never get accustomed to celebrate the Holy Mass”.

As soon as the ceremony was concluded, the young priest was surrounded by people asking his blessing. And everybody moved to a hall for the refreshments. After the Chinese New Year celebrations, Fr Damien will likely go back to Taiwan, at least for some time, where as a Mandarin speaker he can be of great help.
