

The *HERALD* is a Catholic Weekly of the Malaysian Church. It endeavours to communicate up-to-date news and Christian values and strives to dialogue with all sectors of society in order to build a harmonious community of believers in God. We support the formation of a participatory Church and encourage the laity and religious to make moral decisions in the marketplace.



# Choose peace, NOT APATHY

**VATICAN:** In a powerful and deeply resonant first Easter as Pontiff, Pope Leo XIV called on the world to reject violence and indifference, urging nations and individuals alike to embrace dialogue, compassion, and the transforming hope of the Risen Christ.

Presiding over Easter Sunday Mass in St Peter's Square before thousands of faithful, and later delivering his *Urbi et Orbi* ("to the city and to the world") blessing, the Pope's message bridged the spiritual heart of Easter with the urgent realities of a fractured world.

At the centre of his homily was the proclamation that the Resurrection is not merely a past event, but a living reality that continues to renew humanity. Christ's victory, he said, is "life over death, light over darkness, love over hatred" — a victory won not through force, but through self-giving love and total trust in the Father.

"Christ is risen," the Pope declared, "and

in Him, every darkness can be overcome, every fear faced, and every wound healed."

Yet he acknowledged that such hope is not easily embraced. The human experience, he noted, is often marked by sin, loneliness, disappointment, and suffering — realities that can make life feel like "a tunnel with no end in sight." Death, he said, continues to manifest itself in injustice, oppression of the poor, exploitation of creation, and the violence of war.

Against this backdrop, Easter emerges not as an escape from reality, but as its transformation. Reflecting on the Gospel of the empty tomb, the Pope said the first disciples approached it with confusion and grief — emotions that mirror those of many of us today. Yet it was precisely in that uncertainty that hope began to dawn.

"The stone was rolled away not only from the tomb," he said, "but from the hearts of those who dared to believe again."

In his *Urbi et Orbi* message, the pontiff turned his attention to global conflicts, lamenting what he described — echoing his predecessor — as a "globalisation of indifference" to suffering and injustice. Rather

than listing specific conflict zones, he issued a broader appeal for a change of heart.

"We are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it," he said. "We cannot continue to be indifferent. And we cannot resign ourselves to evil."

Calling for concrete action, he urged those with power to "lay down weapons" and choose peace — not a peace imposed by force, but one "forged through dialogue" and grounded in genuine encounter.

"The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent," he said, pointing to Jesus' path of sacrificial love as the model for a world yearning for reconciliation.

The Pope also spoke movingly of those on the margins — the poor, the elderly, migrants, and those burdened by loneliness or despair — reminding the faithful that "no one is excluded from the promise of new life." In a world often marked by division and neglect, he called Christians to become visible witnesses of hope.

"We are called to be people of Easter," he said, "bearing light where there is darkness, hope where there is despair, and love where there is division."

He cautioned against celebrating Easter superficially, bypassing the reality of suffering. "We cannot arrive at Easter morning without passing through Good Friday," he said, underscoring that the Resurrection does not erase the Cross but gives it meaning.

Easter, he added, is ultimately "a new beginning" — a reminder that in Christ, every ending can become the start of something new. "In the risen Christ, a new creation is possible every day," he said.

In a concrete gesture to reinforce his appeal for peace, the Pope announced a prayer vigil for peace to be held in St Peter's Square on April 11, inviting the faithful to unite in prayer for a world "ravaged by wars and marked by hatred and indifference."

As the celebrations concluded, Pope Leo XIV entrusted all who suffer to God, urging the faithful to open their hearts to the One "who makes all things new."

His Easter message, both sobering and hope-filled, served as a clear call to action: to move beyond indifference, to choose dialogue over division, and to live as witnesses to the enduring power of the Resurrection.

**Agencies**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

1 Peter 1:3-4



**Listening together for the future of the church in Malaysia**

■ P4



**A mission to keep society safe**

■ P12



**Step by step to Calvary**

■ P16

ESTABLISHED 1994

Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre  
5, Jalan Robertson, 50150, KL  
Tel / Whatsapp: 03-20268291

Jointly published by the  
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,  
Diocese of Malacca Johore,  
Diocese of Penang and  
Diocese of Keningau

**EDITOR**

Patricia Pereira  
editor1@herald.com.my

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Sandra Ann Inbaraj  
sandra@herald.com.my

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Amanda Mah  
amanda@herald.com.my

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Kevin Francis  
kevin@herald.com.my

**BAHASA MALAYSIA**

Melania Liza Magnus  
liza@herald.com.my

**MANDARIN**

Adelina Wong  
yin4482@gmail.com

**TAMIL**

Perzeus James  
tamil@herald.com.my

**ADMIN ASSISTANT**

Rachael Sharma  
admin@herald.com.my

**ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION**

advertisement@herald.com.my

**MEMORIAM**

memoriam@herald.com.my

**LETTERS**

letterseditor@herald.com.my

**Social Media**

www.heraldmalaysia.com



@heraldmalaysia



heraldmalaysia  
Herald Snapshot



@heraldsnapshot

**Disclaimer:**

The publication provides a platform for diverse perspectives, and the inclusion of these contributions is intended to encourage dialogue and reflection within the Catholic community. The views and opinions expressed in the articles contributed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy or official stance of HERALD The Catholic Weekly.

**Become a voice in the HERALD community**

Capture and share the spirit and vibrancy of your parish or ministry life with our readers.

We're looking for concise articles between 400 to 500 words, accompanied by high-resolution photos (300 DPI) in JPG or PNG format.

Don't forget to include captions that bring your images to life.

Your contributions are essential in keeping our faith community connected and informed.

Send your articles to  
editor1@herald.com.my

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

# From candlelight to community

The Easter Vigil is one of the most moving moments in the life of the Church. Across Malaysia, the faithful gather in quiet anticipation as new members are welcomed into full communion. This year, the Catholic Church in Malaysia rejoiced as more than 4,000 men and women, after months of preparation, said “yes” to a new life in Christ. Their journeys are diverse, their stories deeply personal, but their hope is shared.

Yet once the candles dim and the Easter hymns fade, a quieter, more difficult question emerges: what happens next?

The Church has long emphasised preparation — the catechumenate, formation sessions, rites, and rehearsals that culminate on that sacred night. But initiation is not the end of a journey; it is its beginning. In the months following Easter, newly baptised Catholics enter the ordinary rhythm of parish life — where faith must take root and grow.

And here we must pause and examine ourselves honestly.

Are our new members truly welcomed into the living fabric of our parish communities? Or, after the initial celebrations, are they left to navigate an unfamiliar spiritual landscape alone? Do they find a place where they belong, or slowly drift to the margins — present, but unseen?

The reality, though often unspoken, is that many fall through the cracks.

Some parishes make intentional efforts to bridge this gap. Follow-up gatherings, mentoring companions, or small faith-sharing groups accompany the newly initiated. These initiatives, in whatever form, show a Church that understands the importance of walking together beyond the moment of initiation. Yet many communities lack such structures, leaving new Catholics without

clear pathways for integration and growth.

The transition from structured catechism to the unstructured life of a parish can be disorienting. During formation, they were guided, supported, and accompanied. But once initiated, that structure often disappears, replaced by an unspoken expectation: they will simply “fit in.”

Belonging does not happen automatically. It is cultivated.

If we are serious about being a Church that welcomes, our responsibility cannot end at the baptismal font — it begins there. The early Church understood this well. The period of mystagogy — the months after initiation — was essential: a time to deepen understanding, reflect on the sacraments, and integrate into community life. It was a time of accompaniment.

Perhaps this is what we are being called to rediscover.

What if every newly initiated Catholic were intentionally accompanied for at least a year? Not through rigid programmes, but through genuine relationships. What if parishioners, small groups, or Basic Ecclesial Communities opened their doors — not merely as hosts, but as fellow pilgrims? What if we shifted our mindset from “they have completed the programme” to “they are part of us now”?

Such an approach requires effort, but more importantly, a change of heart.

It means recognising that faith is sustained not by information alone, but by community; that the Gospel is not only taught, but caught — through shared experiences, conversations, struggles, and joys. It means creating spaces where questions are welcomed, doubts are not feared, and growth is seen as lifelong.

Parish life must become a living classroom. New

Catholics thrive when drawn into the heartbeat of the Church — through service, fellowship, prayer, and shared mission. Communities that actively integrate newcomers show how faith animates every aspect of life, turning belief into action and hope into lived experience.

For many new Catholics, the first year after Easter can determine whether faith flourishes or fades. A warm greeting at Mass is not enough. Without intentional inclusion, even the most enthusiastic newcomer can begin to feel like an outsider.

Yet the opportunity before us is immense. Each new Catholic brings a unique story, a fresh perspective, and a renewed sense of wonder. They remind cradle Catholics of the beauty of a faith that can sometimes be taken for granted. They carry a quiet fire — one that, if nurtured, can enliven entire communities. But like any flame, it must be tended.

To journey with them for a year is not to hold them back, but to strengthen their wings. It ensures that when they step forward independently, they do so with confidence, rooted in relationships and grounded in faith. It says, in a very real way: you are not alone.

Ultimately, this is not just about new members. It is about the kind of Church we are becoming.

Are we a Church of programmes, or a Church of people? Are we content with counting numbers, or committed to forming disciples? Are we satisfied with welcoming, or ready to accompany?

The Easter Vigil may mark the end of their formal journey into the Church — but for all of us, it should mark the beginning of a deeper responsibility.

*Patricia Pereira*

## Held, healed and loved again

*Divine Mercy is God loving us so much even at our worst and refusing to let us stay there.*

Ask my mother, and she will tell you that I was mischievous, disobedient, stubborn, far from the child I ought to have been. I made mistakes, tested her patience, and often failed to recognise or appreciate her sacrifices. Yet, through it all, her love never wavered. It remained constant, gentle, forgiving, and steadfast; an unspoken assurance that no matter how far I strayed, I was always hers, always loved without condition.

Likewise, this is simply the very nature of God. God is love. He doesn't wait for us to be perfect. He rushes to us, embraces us, and gently puts us back together. He wipes away our tears. “It is OK,” He assures us. He cleanses us. No questioning. No waiting. No fees. No additional costs.

For many of us, this is incomprehensible, difficult to understand, confusing, and bewildering on a human level. For the simple reason that humans frequently love one another under certain settings. “Only if you do this for me, act a certain way, or meet a certain requirement will I love you.”

Therefore, it is just too much for the learned and rational mind to process when we discover that God's love is unconditional and that He searches for His lost children without asking for anything in return, exactly like in the narrative of the Prodigal Son. How can this even make sense? Here, how is justice upheld? Is this rational? “Why me? I'm a sinner! I'm not worthy! I'm too ungrateful, too far away, and too dirty,” we exclaim. Often, we are the ones who condemn ourselves and keep

ourselves in the depths of remorse, sorrow, shame, and despair, not God.

This is our Father. A father who yearns to mend, heal, and forgive. This same God is the father of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus Christ, our Saviour. The universe was created by this same God. How free we would be if we could all realise this! In 1 John 3:1, the Bible states, “Observe how greatly the Father has loved us! We are referred to as God's children because of His immense love, and we truly are.” Psalm 103:13 adds, “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.” This verse emphasises God's compassion, understanding, and compassionate, fatherly mercy toward those who worship Him.

At the heart of Christianity, Divine Mercy shows us that God's love is greater than our sins. Jesus Christ, who died in order to atone for our sins and grant us eternal bliss with God, makes this clear. According to John 3:16, “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” People in our immediate vicinity, friends, relatives, coworkers, acquaintances, and even complete strangers on social media platforms like Facebook, for instance, know us by name yet choose to categorise us based on rumours, gossip, and “sins”. But God, who knows every hidden sin and guilt of ours, calls us by our name instead, and makes us His beloved children through His Son, Jesus Christ. God does not wait

## Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Bro Joseph Uvarajah Savage

### Divine Mercy Sunday (A)

Readings: Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47;

1 Peter 1:3-9;

Gospel: John 20:19-31

for us to be perfect. He alone is perfect. He perfects us. All we need to do is return to Him.

Through St Faustina Kowalska, the Church is reminded that from the Heart of Christ flows mercy for the whole world. The rays in the Divine Mercy image, red and pale, represent blood and water, flowing from His Heart. This tells us something profound: Mercy is not cheap. It flows from the sacrifice of the Cross. Every time we approach Him, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are not just forgiven, we are restored, renewed, and loved again.

Divine Mercy is not something we simply receive. It is something we are meant to become. It shapes who we are as Catholics. If we have experienced compassion, we must demonstrate mercy in our families, communities, ministries, workplaces, and schools. People today are searching for more than simply rules; they want an encounter. And, in many cases, their first interaction with God's kindness is via us. We are the salt and light of the world. Let us be Christ unto others. Our words and actions are most likely the only bible some people will ever read.

Jesus, I trust in You, please never let me go. Amen.



## COMMUNIQUÉ

We wish to announce that Dr Gary Liew has completed his term of office as the Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Human Development (AOHD).

We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr Liew for his three years of dedicated service, steadfast leadership, and tireless commitment to the mission of AOHD. Under his guidance, many initiatives were strengthened to uphold the dignity of the human person.

With effect from April 1, 2026, Mr Aaron Koh will serve as the Acting Director of AOHD. Aaron who joined AOHD on May 2, 2023 as the Coordinator for the Ministry of the Poor, will oversee the ongoing works of AOHD and ensure continuity during this period of transition.

We thank both Dr Liew and Mr Koh for their commitment to the mission of AOHD and ask for your continued support and prayers.

*Clarence Devadass*

Rev Fr Dr Clarence Devadass  
Chancellor  
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur  
March 31, 2026

# Korean clergy and laity visit SFX Melaka

YK Ng

MELAKA: A group of Korean clergy, accompanied by laity, recently visited Melaka and celebrated Mass at the newly renovated Church of St Francis Xavier (SFX).

The visitors were warmly welcomed by parish priest Fr Moses Rayappan, who presented the Korean clergy with chasubles commemorating the diocese's 50th anniversary on behalf of Bishop Bernard Paul. The clergy wore the chasubles during the Mass.

After the celebration, the group met Rt Rev Bernard Paul, Bishop of the Malacca Johore diocese, who then invited them to lunch with the diocesan clergy at the Good Shepherd Catholic Seminary. The timing coincided with the diocesan Clergy Monthly Recollection, giving the visitors an opportunity to meet many priests of the diocese.

Portuguese cuisine was served for lunch. Some clergy had wondered whether the food might be too spicy, but many of the visitors enjoyed the meal and found the spiciness manageable. They particularly appreciated the warm hospitality extended to them.

The visit was arranged through Fr Joseph



Lee Ki-Beom, who had previously written to the diocese expressing his intention to celebrate Mass at SFX and meet Bishop Bernard Paul. Afterward, he expressed heartfelt gratitude for the welcome and generosity shown to the group.

On behalf of the group, Fr Joseph said, "The vestments you so graciously gifted will forever remain a treasured memory. In particular, the St Francis Xavier chasuble

and stole set presented by Bishop Bernard is an invaluable and deeply meaningful gift. For a priest, there could be no greater honour."

The visitors also presented Bishop Bernard with a statue of St Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Korean-born Catholic priest who studied at College General Seminary, along with Korean wines and small marble busts of "Laughing Jesus."



## KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

### Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

#### April

- 14-15 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 15 Meeting – AOHD Board
- 16 Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance
- 19 Confirmation – Church of the Sacred Heart, Bentong



## PENANG DIOCESE

### Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

#### April

- 13-16 Clergy Outing
- 19 Briefing & Reflection for the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 at 8.00pm
- 20 Online International Meeting of Bishops at 6.00pm - Friends of the Focolare Movement via Zoom



## MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

### Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

#### April

- 14 Meeting via Zoom – Caritas Malaysia Diocesan Directors & Ecclesiastical Assistants (CM DEA)
- 18 Council of Pastoral Services Assembly – Church of St Louis, Kluang



## Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #267



Welcome dear friends and a blessed and Holy Easter to all of you,

Gandhi saw the greatest sacrifice: "A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."

Clarence W Hall saw something that cannot stay buried: "Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there."

And Pope St JP II wisely said: "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song." What did Easter mean for you this year?

#### Local Takes. No Escaping!

A historic show of solidarity by India, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, China and Thailand, to coordinate large-scale emergency evacuations of their nationals in the Middle-East, is laudable.

Malaysians were reminded to adopt a modest lifestyle with the pressure on the domestic economy by the global conflicts.

With the rise in diesel price and subsidy cut, expect a reaction from the transport sectors.

The most basic recycling practice, is to separate food waste from plastic containers and rinse before disposal, is most overlooked.

The latest World Happiness Report has voted that Finland, Iceland and Denmark are the happiest countries.

Malaysia is ranked the 13th most peaceful country in the world.

#### Reading the Signs: Called to Safeguard. Pope Leo XIV:

To warring world leaders: "God rejects the prayers of leaders who start wars and have hands full of blood."

To the new Anglican Archbishop of

Canterbury: Recalling decades of Catholic-Anglican dialogue and progress, he urged continued collaboration despite differences, emphasising shared baptism and mission.

To church leaders regarding the place of young people: Invest in them, in their abilities and skills, not in objects. They constitute a key strength of your work. They ought to become protagonists of their own, not cogs in the wheel of commercial success.

To the Commission for Protection of Minors: Build a Culture of Care, not just Compliance. Safeguarding is not merely about rules and protocols. Every parish, institution, and ministry must foster a culture where protecting minors and vulnerable persons flows naturally from faith.

#### A Thought for the Week: Secret to Success?

A young man asked Socrates, the secret to success.

Socrates patiently listened to the man's question and told him to meet him near the river the following day for the answer.

The next day, they met at the river. They got into the river till the water was up to their neck. Suddenly Socrates ducked him into the water. The young man was shocked and he struggled to get out of the water. Socrates, being strong, kept him under until the boy started turning blue. Finally, Socrates pulled the man's head out of the water. The young man gasped and took a deep breath of air.

Socrates asked, "What did you want the most when your head was in the water?" The young man replied, "Air."

Socrates said, "That is the secret to success. When you want success as badly as you wanted the air while you were in the water, then you will get it. There is no

other secret."

The lesson from the waters: A burning desire is the starting point of all accomplishment. Just like a small fire cannot give much heat, a weak desire cannot produce great results.

#### QnQ? Divine Love is persistent? What if we are not ready?

The Passion is not a story of humanity rising to the occasion. It is a story of God refusing to stop for our readiness, nor withdrawing because of our failures, nor making salvation contingent on our worthiness."

Palm Sunday and Holy Week sets us up to witness "Divine Persistence" at its finest: raw, unadulterated and unsettling...a kind of love that doesn't flinch, doesn't recalculate, doesn't pull back when rejected.

Here we don't see humanity finally getting it right...we see God choosing to stay when everything in us falls apart. It's a refusal story: A refusal to abandon. A refusal to give up. A refusal to let our worst moments have the final word.

But Divine Love is pre-emptive, stubborn...costly! Our mistakes don't stop the flow of grace nor HE moving towards us.

Divine Persistence...the Holy Week reveals a God screaming "You always were worth it and I'm not leaving."

The Spirit @ Work: "The empty tomb is not to let Christ out, but to let us in — to see, believe, and enter into new life." Pope Francis

Something to tickle you: "The only visible sign of God in the world is the cross." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God Is on the Cross

*Bernard Paul*  
Bishop Bernard Paul



# Listening together for the future of the Church in Malaysia

## Inspiration for the pastoral thrust of MPC2026

The Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026) is not beginning from nothing. Its inspiration is rooted in the recent teachings of the Church and the pastoral vision offered by the late Holy Father, Pope Francis, to the universal Church. The four key areas of pastoral concern are drawn from five major documents of his pontificate: *Amoris Laetitia* and *Christus Vivit* (Family), *Evangelii Gaudium* (the life and mission of the Church), *Fratelli Tutti* (Society), and *Laudato Si'* (Ecology).

These themes, organisers emphasise, are not arbitrarily chosen but arise from the Church's own discernment of the most pressing pastoral priorities of our time.

## Teachings from a pastor with a shepherd's heart

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis highlights the Church's missionary identity, writing, "I dream of a missionary option, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything" (EG 27). His vision calls the Church to move beyond an inward focus and to become a community continually sent

forth to proclaim the Gospel.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, he underscores the importance of family life and pastoral care, noting that "the welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church" (AL 31). Together with *Christus Vivit*, which calls the Church to accompany young people in their faith journey, these teachings reaffirm the central role of families and youth in the Church's mission.

Through *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis expands this vision to the wider human family, urging a renewed commitment to fraternity: "It is my desire that... we can contribute to the re-birth of a universal aspiration to fraternity" (FT 8). The document calls for a society rooted in justice, solidarity, and care for the vulnerable.

Meanwhile, *Laudato Si'* highlights the Church's responsibility towards creation. Emphasising that "everything is interconnected" (LS 91), the encyclical frames care for the environment as an integral part of moral and spiritual life.

## A vision offering a pastoral framework for the Church in Malaysia

Taken together, these teachings present a co-

herent pastoral vision. They call the Church to strengthen family life, renew her missionary spirit, promote a just and humane society, and care for the environment. These four areas — Family, Church, Society, and Ecology — provide a guiding framework for reflection.

MPC2026 seeks to apply these priorities within the Malaysian context, recognising the country's unique social, cultural, and religious landscape. The pastoral challenges faced by the Church in Malaysia must therefore be discerned within its lived realities.

## Marked by synodality

In line with the universal Church's direction, MPC2026 adopts a synodal approach centred on a method known as Conversation in the Spirit. This process is not a debate or decision-making forum, but a prayerful exercise in listening — to one another, to lived experiences, and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Participants are invited to share, listen attentively, and discern together what God is calling the Church in Malaysia to do. The goal is not simply to generate ideas, but to identify meaningful pastoral directions that

can strengthen the Church's mission.

From this process, pastoral pathways are expected to emerge. These are not definitive programmes, but guiding directions that will help orient the Church's ongoing growth in mission and service.

Following MPC2026, each diocese will reflect on how these pathways can be implemented according to its own circumstances. In this way, the Convention seeks not to impose uniform solutions, but to encourage each local Church to respond faithfully within its own pastoral reality.

## Listening, discerning and walking together

Ultimately, MPC2026 is not merely about documents or plans. It is about the Church in Malaysia listening together, discerning together, and journeying forward in unity.

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Convention hopes to strengthen family life, renew the Church's missionary spirit, foster fraternity in society, and deepen care for creation — shaping a Church that continues to walk together in faith and mission. **Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 Secretariat**

## MPC2026 preparations begin in Sibul

SIBU: Seventy participants and coordinators from across the diocese gathered at *Laudato Si'*, Sacred Heart Cathedral for the first preparatory session of the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026).

The gathering unfolded as a living experience of synodality — a Church coming together to listen, discern, and journey forward in unity. Sibul will host MPC2026 from September 9 to 13, a historic event bringing together all nine dioceses of the Catholic Church in Malaysia. This first session marked the beginning of that shared journey.

The day began with a welcome address by Bishop Joseph Hii, who invited participants to approach the process not merely as organisers, but as pilgrims — open to the Holy Spirit, attentive to one another, and committed to the mission of the Church.

Fr Alphonsus Tang then guided participants through the background and objectives of MPC2026, before leading them into "Conversation in the Spirit," a reflective process encouraging prayerful listening — to one another and to God — echoing the vision of the Church as the People of God journeying together.

Small-group discussions created spaces of attentive silence, honest sharing, and spiritual openness. Representatives from all 15 groups later shared the fruits of their discernment, revealing diverse insights alongside a growing sense of unity. In a particularly meaningful moment, Fr Joseph Sebastian invited two young participants to present their group's reflections, highlighting a Church that values every generation and allows the young to actively shape its journey.

Practical steps were also taken, including the selection of 15 facilitators and 15 notetakers to guide future conversations with clarity and depth. Beyond structure, the spirit of collaboration stood out. Coordinators across ministries — logistics, transportation, hospitality, medical aid, security, liturgy, media, and more — worked side by side with parish representatives from Sacred Heart Cathedral and the parishes of St Mary of Divine Mercy, and St Teresa.

This was synodality in action: a Church where different gifts, roles, and responsibilities converge in shared mission; where listening is valued, participation encouraged, and



Participants sharing among the groups during the Conversation in the Spirit.

responsibility carried together. In Pope Francis' words, this is a Church that does not walk alone, but walks together.

The day culminated in the launching of MPC2026 preparations, with Bishop Joseph Hii presenting banners to parish representatives — a symbolic and missionary gesture sending each parish forth to carry the spirit of the Convention into their communities.

The session concluded with a group photo at the Shrine of Mary Immaculate, Sacred Heart Cathedral, alongside a welcoming ban-

ner extending an invitation to Catholics across Malaysia. Anchored in the theme *Celebrate, Listen, and Walk Together*, the session showed that MPC2026 is already underway — not just in programmes, but in hearts being formed, voices being heard, and a community learning what it means to journey together.

As the Diocese of Sibul continues preparations, one thing is clear: MPC2026 is more than a convention; it is the shaping of a synodal Church — alive, listening, and moving forward in hope. **SocCom Sibul**



**DIOCESE OF PENANG**  
PKK/BDN/2026/04/230

**But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5**

### 1. *Perjalanan Salib* for all nine dioceses of Malaysia towards MPC2026

The *Perjalanan Salib* which was launched by the nine Bishops of Malaysia in April 2025, continues its journey to the parishes and various communities within the dioceses throughout Malaysia.

These nine crosses representing the dioceses of Malaysia — Sabah (three), Sarawak (three), and Semenanjung (three), will be brought together and assembled into ONE at the Malaysian Pastoral Convention 2026

(MPC2026) this coming September in Sibul, Sarawak.

This will be the first gathering with representatives from all the nine dioceses of Malaysia, serving as a powerful testimony of communion, participation and mission for the Malaysian Catholic Church.

I invite you to pray for the spiritual fruitfulness of this journey and for our continuous preparation towards the convention, that we may remain united as one Body of Christ. For more information, go to <https://gerejakatolik.my/en/events/perjalanan-salib>

### 2. Malaysian Pastoral Convention 2026: First Briefing and Reflection

The first Briefing and Reflection for the

Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 will be held on April 19 at 8.00pm via Zoom for the delegates from the various parishes and ministries representing our diocese.

As they begin their spiritual preparation and discernment for the historic gathering in Sibul, they carry the voice and spirit of our local Church. Let us keep these representatives in our daily prayers as they begin this crucial discernment.

May the Holy Spirit inspire their discussions and unite them in purpose for the good of the Church in Malaysia.

### 4. Clergy Outing 2026

The Clergy of our diocese will be away for a clergy outing from April 13 - 16, 2026. Please keep us in your prayers, as we come

together for a moment of recollection and recreation, to renew our fraternal communion and strengthen our bond of unity, so as to be rejuvenated for our continued pastoral ministry.

### 5. Feast of St Anne & St Joachim 2026

The Novena and Feast of St Anne and St Joachim this year will begin from July 17 and culminate on July 26. Let us pray for all pilgrims, volunteers, celebrants and confessors as we experience a meaningful and grace-filled celebration through the intercession of St Anne and St Joachim. Go to <https://acesse.one/stannebm>

*Sebastian Francis*

**Cardinal Sebastian Francis**

## Notifications and Updates

# Chrism Mass reflects shared priesthood of all believers

KOTA KINABALU: A deep sense of unity, renewal and spiritual joy marked the celebration of the Chrism Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 26, presided over by Archbishop John Wong and attended by clergy and faithful from across the archdiocese.

"I always look forward to the Chrism Mass. It is a celebration of the entire archdiocese," Archbishop John said in his homily.

"The Chrism Mass is indeed a special day of joy for all of us who are privileged to share in the Lord's presbyteral ministry."

In his reflection, the archbishop highlighted the theological significance of the celebration, recalling the two forms of priesthood bestowed

by Christ — the ordained ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of all the faithful. He emphasised that the Chrism Mass is a powerful reminder of the shared participation of all believers in Christ's mission.

"As we gather for the Chrism Mass, we are reminded of the two priesthoods the Lord has given to each of us," he said, underscoring the unity between clergy and laity.

Archbishop John also prayed for himself and his fellow priests, asking that they be continually renewed in their vocation. He called for generosity and dedication in their ministry, describing priesthood as both a privilege and a profound responsibility.

"The Chrism Mass reassures us that Jesus is close to us, that He continues to carry out His saving work through the sacraments," he said. "In the sacraments, Jesus is present for us. He touches us."

Reflecting on the sacred oils, particularly the Oil of Chrism used in Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, he said Christ reaches out to the faithful in a personal and transformative way.

"Every person who receives these sacraments is touched, either by the hand of the bishop or through the hands of the priest. In this way, it is Jesus Himself who touches them."

He added that the Oil of Catechumens signifies strength to renounce sin, while the Oil of the



*The priests renewing their promises.*

Sick brings healing and comfort.

"In all these sacraments, Christ touches us... and to be touched by Christ is to be healed and made whole."

Archbishop John stressed that the Chrism Mass is a day of rejoicing in the gift of the sacraments and an invitation to return to these "wellsprings of true life," especially amid the anxieties and challenges of daily living.

Following the homily, priests renewed their priestly vows, visibly expressing unity and fraternity in their shared commitment to serve the Church. The liturgy continued with the presentation of the sacred oils,

which symbolise the Church's mission of healing, sanctification and initiation into the Christian life.

The archbishop also expressed gratitude to the faithful for their continued support, noting that the Chrism Mass is a powerful reminder of Christ's closeness and His ongoing saving work through the sacraments.

At the conclusion of the Mass, Msgr Nicholas Stephen blessed the oils brought forward by members of the congregation, marking a solemn moment that reflected the unity of the Church and the shared participation of all in its sacramental life.

## The cost of not knowing Christ

KENINGAU: More than 1,000 faithful gathered at Dataran Keuskupan Keningau for the Chrism Mass, a significant liturgical celebration marked by reflection, renewal, and a call to deeper faith.

The Mass brought together clergy and laity from across the diocese, including several priests from Indonesia currently serving in Keningau, who concelebrated the Eucharistic celebration.

In his homily, Bishop Cornelius Piong invited the congregation to reflect on a profound question from the Gospel: why Judas Iscariot chose to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and why he failed to remain faithful.

"Why did Judas sell Jesus for only 30 pieces of silver? Why was he not faithful?" he asked, urging the faithful to examine their own relationship with Christ.

Drawing from this reflection, the bishop outlined three essential principles to help ensure that the failure of Judas is not repeated in their own lives.

"First, if we desire to remain united with Jesus, we must come to know Him," he said, emphasising that a genuine relationship with Christ begins with recognising Him not merely as a historical figure, but as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

"Second, we must love Him," he continued, noting that love for Christ is nurtured through prayer, listening to the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and acts of charity — the foundations of a living and active faith.

"Third, when we truly know and love Him, we will naturally desire to serve Him," he added, pointing out that service is the fruit of an authentic relationship with Christ.

Reflecting further on Judas, the prelate suggested that although he followed Jesus, he may not have truly understood who He was.



*Bishop Cornelius Piong blessing the oils.*

"Judas followed Jesus, but perhaps he did not fully recognise Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour," he said.

He also noted that Judas may have been driven by personal agendas and worldly desires, viewing Jesus through a limited, self-interested lens. "Perhaps his desires and thoughts were too worldly, and he saw Jesus only from his own perspective," the bishop said, warning that such a mindset can distort one's faith.

He stressed that this serves as an important lesson for all Christians, especially those called to leadership in the Church. Knowing God, he said, is essential to sustaining a faithful vocation.

"As followers of Jesus — and even more so as priests or bishops — it is crucial that we truly know the Lord. If we do not come to Him, listen to His Word, and pray, what will move us to love Him? There will be nothing."

He cautioned against the danger of following Jesus in name while failing to live according to His will, noting that such a disconnect leads to a superficial faith lacking depth and

authenticity.

"Following Jesus without aligning ourselves with His will is not enough. Even when we are busy, we must make time to come to know the Lord."

Encouraging the faithful to cultivate a personal relationship with Christ, he said this communion of love is the source of strength and fidelity in the Christian life.

"Only by taking time to know Him can we grow into a true communion of love with Him."

After the homily, the priests renewed their priestly commitment. Addressing the priests from Indonesia, Bishop Cornelius said that although their bishop is far away, they remain united in prayer.

The liturgy continued with three seminarians bringing forward the Oil of Catechumens, the Sacred Chrism, and the Oil of the Sick to the altar.

The Chrism Mass, one of the most important celebrations in the Church's liturgical calendar, served as a powerful reminder of the call to renewal. It brought the faithful together in a shared expression of faith, inviting them to deepen their commitment to Christ.

## Sibu bishop calls priest to renew mission

SIBU: "Every person is a gift of creation," said Bishop Joseph Hii as the Diocese of Sibu gathered for the Chrism Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 31, where all 23 priests from its 12 parishes renewed their priestly promises. The liturgy, held from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, was both a celebration of priesthood and a moment of thanksgiving for God's gifts to the Church and all creation.

Drawing from the message of Pope Leo XIV for the upcoming Vocation Sunday, the bishop invited the faithful to rediscover the beauty and responsibility of their vocation. He reminded them that every calling — whether to priesthood, religious life, or family life — is a response to God's love and a mission to serve others.

Describing the Chrism Mass as a special "Priests' Day," he highlighted that it is rooted in gratitude for Jesus Christ, who continues His mission through His priests. Priesthood, he said, is a gift freely given — not for the individual, but for the service of the People of God, society, and all creation. He encouraged the faithful to support and pray for their priests, recognising the challenges and responsibilities they carry.

Reflecting on the clergy's recollection, Bishop Joseph noted the 2026 theme: The priest as a Man of Prayer. Priests are called to intercede not only for themselves, but for the Church, humanity, and the world. He expressed gratitude for their faithful commitment to praying the Divine Office, through which they carry before God the needs of families, the sick, and the suffering, becoming bridges between God and His people.

He also reminded the faithful that the Chrism Mass includes the consecration of sacred oils used in the sacraments throughout the year — signs of healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

The celebration concluded with thanksgiving for the gift of priesthood and the marking of the 33rd ordination anniversary of Bishop Joseph, Fr Alphonsus Tang, and Fr Andrew Tan, ordained on March 25, 1993, the Feast of the Annunciation. The community marked the occasion with a joyful cake-cutting, expressing gratitude for their faithful service and witnessing the deep bond shared between shepherd and flock. **Sibu Soccom**



*The congregation at Mass.*

# Transforming into missionary disciples

KUALALUMPUR: Responding to the Lord's invitation to step away from the busyness of daily life, 27 parishioners from across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur gathered for a retreat themed *Transforming from Disciples to Missionary Disciples*. Organised by AMNEC (Archdiocesan Mission of New Evangelisation for Christ), the retreat was held at the Church of Our Lady of Fatima.

The retreat began with praise and worship led by Cornerstone Disciples, creating an atmosphere of openness and gratitude. Participants were invited to set aside daily concerns and listen attentively to God's voice.

Retreat master Michael Xavier reflected on *The Call of the First Disciples* (Luke 5:1-11), leading participants into an examination of conscience. They were encouraged to revisit their first encounter with Christ, reflect on pivotal moments in their faith journey, and recognise how God has been guiding them towards evangelisation.

A highlight of the retreat was the opportunity for participants to pray for one another — a first-time experience for many. Parveen shared, "As I was being prayed over, I felt the presence of the Lord and a warmth surrounding me. It was a beautiful experience, and I felt at peace."

Gabriel, who assisted in facilitating the retreat, touched many with his testimony. His sharing, together with a reflection on the Emmaus journey, invited participants to recognise Christ's presence even in moments



Participants during one of the sessions.

of struggle, disappointment and doubt.

Small group sessions further deepened the experience, as participants gathered in groups of five to share their faith journeys. These moments of openness became a source of encouragement, strengthening bonds within the community.

For Anna Ong from the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang, what stood out was the emphasis on personal and peer prayer, quiet reflection, journaling, and Conversation in the Spirit. "I now understand that being a mis-

sionary disciple simply means sharing our encounter with God's love — our story — and that is not difficult to do," she said.

In the stillness of prayer, many encountered the Lord in a deeper and more personal way, bringing before Him their hopes, struggles, and thanksgiving.

Reflecting on the retreat, Thomas Patrick said, "I experienced the Holy Spirit touching my heart in a deeply personal way, making God's presence closer than ever before. I now see my faith as an overflow of the love I have received, and I feel called to reach out to others with renewed purpose."

For Rosalind Xavier of the Church of the Holy Rosary, the retreat rekindled her faith and strengthened her desire to live as a missionary disciple, while Alizhar Arshad described it as "a powerful and blessed experience."

Daniel Arputham's testimony captured the essence of the retreat. "I realised that the Lord has been knocking on the door of my heart for a long time, but I failed to notice it. Through the Discovery programme and now this retreat, I have encountered Jesus' love and mercy. I now desire to place Christ at the centre of every decision I make and to share His love with others."

Those interested in learning more about the Discovery (AMNEC-CCO Faith Series) may contact 012-3313997 (Veronica) or 011-14322243 (Jane Maria). **Andrew and Veronica Lim**



## Bringing Christ's comfort to the sick and homebound

ALOR SETAR: In preparation for Holy Week, parish priest of the Church of St Michael, Fr Michael Cheah, made a pastoral visit to the sick and elderly who are homebound. During the visit, he administered the Sacrament of Confession and the Anointing of the Sick, extending these graces also to their caregivers.

His presence brought comfort and spiritual strength to those he encountered. Many expressed heartfelt gratitude, feeling uplifted and deeply consoled through the sacraments and shared moments of prayer.

The visit was a gentle yet powerful reminder of the Church's closeness in times of illness and vulnerability, offering hope, reassurance, and a renewed sense of faith to both the sick and those who care for them, especially in this sacred time leading to Holy Week.

## Legionaries renew consecration at annual Acies in Rawang

RAWANG: The Church of St Jude hosted the annual Acies of the Legion of Mary on March 28, in collaboration with the Regia team led by Ignatius Wang. It was an honour and a privilege to co-host this solemn multi-lingual celebration, which brought together legionaries and parishioners in a spirit of unity and devotion.

The parish is blessed with praesidia across all language groups — Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin and Tamil — as well as a Junior praesidium. Each participated fully in the celebration, reflecting the rich diversity and vibrant inclusivity of the parish community.

The day began with the opening prayer and the recitation of the Rosary, followed by Mass celebrated by Spiritual Director Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap, concelebrated with parish priest, Fr Simon Labrooy, and assistant parish priest, Fr Jonathan Rao. The Mass drew about 250 legionaries from various parishes, and parishioners.

At the heart of the Acies was the Act of Consecration — when legionaries renewed their dedication to Our Lady. Each stepped forward to proclaim: "I am all yours, my Queen and my Mother, and all that I have is yours." This solemn act, united with the prayers of the Tessera, reaffirmed their commitment to serve faithfully under Mary's banner with courage and love.

In his homily, Fr Paul reflected on the call to be "salt and light," reminding legionaries that their consecration is not merely symbolic, but a mission to bring Christ's presence into the world. Drawing inspiration from Mary's humility and unwavering faith, he urged them to live out their vocation with steadfastness and quiet fidelity.

Fr Simon, in a brief reflection in Bahasa Malaysia, reminded all baptised Christians that their mission extends beyond parish activities. It is a universal call to witness, to evangelise, and



Legionaries renewing their dedication to Our Lady.

to live the Gospel in everyday life.

Echoing this message, Ignatius, in his address as president, called legionaries to sanctify the "daily grind" as the salt of the earth, bringing hope and joy especially to the marginalised and the lonely. "Our light is not our own," he reminded them, "but reflected from Christ through Mary." He encouraged them to let this light shine through their apostolic works — in homes, hospitals, and on the streets.

He further emphasised that the Acies is a moment of renewal and conversion, sending legionaries forth as "soldiers of the Queen," called to be salt that gives flavour and light that leads others to Christ.

The celebration concluded with fellowship, embodying St Jude's parish identity as a welcoming Church. This spirit of hospitality and unity was evident throughout the day, as legionaries and parishioners came together in joy and renewal, sharing devotion under the loving guidance of Our Lady. **Marie Anthony**



### Welcome to the IJ Centre, Port Dickson



Step into a place where history meets harmony.

Established in 1915, the IJ Centre in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia is a lovingly preserved wooden heritage retreat that gracefully blends timeless charm with modern comfort.

Nestled along the tranquil coast of Batu 3, the Centre offers direct beachfront access and uninterrupted sea views — the perfect setting for rest, reflection, and renewal. With accommodation for up to 76 guests, it is a serene haven where tradition and tranquility come together.

Whether you are planning a retreat, youth camp, formation programme, seminar, conference, or meeting, the IJ Centre provides versatile spaces suitable for both overnight stays and day-use gatherings. Surrounded by nature's beauty, it rekindles the simplicity and peace of the good old days — an ideal place to reconnect with yourself, with others, and with the world around you.

For over a century, the IJ Centre has remained a cherished sanctuary where heritage, hospitality, and inspiration thrive side by side. Proudly environmentally friendly, the Centre continues to uphold its legacy with care for both people and the planet.

Come and experience the timeless spirit of the IJ Centre — where every visit feels like coming home.

For further details, kindly contact:  
Terry Nagan  
☎ +60 13-351 1614

# Sibu Diocese hosts safeguarding discourse for clergy and seminarians

SIBU: The Diocese of Sibu's Clergy Monthly Recollection for March focused on the Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Persons. Attendees included the bishop, clergy, Mill Hill Missionaries and seminarians.

The safeguarding sessions were led by members of the Professional Standards Office from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and the Diocese of Penang, who shared their expertise and offered valuable guidance to all participants.

Bishop Joseph Hii warmly welcomed participants to the Safeguarding Discourse, highlighting it as a fruitful example of collaboration and resource-sharing among Malaysian dioceses. He emphasised that such initiatives not only strengthen the Church's commitment to safeguarding but also set the tone for the upcoming Malaysian Pastoral Convention (MPC) in Sibu from 9–13 September — the first national pastoral convention bringing together the Catholic Church of Malaysia.

Fr Paul Ling, the bishop's delegate in the Professional Standards Office (PSO) and organiser of the programme, expressed gratitude for the enriching sessions. He noted that the talks were deeply engaging, supported by the personal experiences of the speakers and real-life case studies, which greatly enhanced the clergy's understanding of safeguarding issues and the appropriate approaches and responses required.

*Awareness of Child Protection* was presented by Raymund Jagan, a registered and licensed counsellor. He traced the history of child safeguarding and outlined the various forms of abuse and neglect affecting children. Raymund provided practical guidance on



developing effective child protection policies, referencing the *Tutela Minorum* – Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF) and the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. He further highlighted the importance of proper reporting and response to allegations of abuse and neglect.

Lawyer Christopher Kushi focused on safeguarding terminology, beginning with the universally recognised definition of children/minors as under 18 years of age, as codified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), guided by the principle of “The Best Interest of the Child”. He clarified terms such as concerns, allegations, suspicions, and complaints, and addressed the meaning of vulnerable persons/adults, a key component of the Holy See's safeguarding policies.

Christopher also discussed privileged communications, including the inviolability of the Seal of Confession, and shared real-life case examples highlighting challenges and responses in child protection work.

During breaks, participants discussed practical risk management and parish safety measures. One parish raised concerns about

bushes near toilet entrances, suggesting trimming to remove potential hiding places. Toilets equipped with external CCTV cameras should also display clear signage and an image symbol to inform all individuals of surveillance, both as protective and preventative measures.

Fr Paul Ling raised a question on why the committee is designated the Professional Standards Office. Christopher explained that during the 2025 Great Pilgrimage of Hope Convention in Penang, the Bangkok Secretariat requested that the term Safeguarding Office be used as the contact reference on invitations, ensuring clarity on where to direct safeguarding matters. This aligns with the UGF clause 1.2.2: “The Church Authority establishes a Safeguarding Committee at the leadership level, to oversee the effective implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.”

At the conclusion of the discourse on safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons, Bishop Joseph Hii, along with the clergy, Mill Hill Missionaries and seminarians, formally signed the Pledge to Safeguard Children and Vulnerable Adults of the Diocese of Sibu.

## Persevering in prayer

SANDAKAN: At St Mary's Cathedral, the weekly Rosary and novena devotion remains a quiet but steadfast witness of faith.

Every Saturday evening, the Rosary begins at 4.50pm, followed by the novena at 5.10pm. For many years, the devotion drew a good number of parishioners who gathered faithfully to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and seek her intercession.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed this. The number of devotees slowly decreased.

Despite the small numbers, those entrusted to lead the devotion did not give up.

Recently, a parishioner who had moved to Kota Kinabalu asked why the novena devotion seemed to have fewer participants, noting how beautiful the prayer to Our Lady is. Wanting to encourage the devotion, he generously donated two dozen novena booklets and had them couriered to Sandakan.

Since then, there has been a small but encouraging change. With the availability of the novena booklets, more parishioners have begun joining the Saturday prayers once again.

Among the quiet stories of grace within the community is that of a parishioner who suffered a stroke earlier this year. Members of the Legion of Mary prayed the Rosary for him during his recovery. Today, as he continues to regain his strength, he faithfully attends the Saturday rosary and novena. Grateful for his healing, he has even expressed his desire to serve God by helping to lead the prayers after receiving proper guidance.

Moments like these remind the parish community that the fruits of prayer are often unseen but deeply present. Even when only a few gather, their faithful devotion continues to bear spiritual fruits.

The weekly Rosary and novena at St Mary's Cathedral remain an open invitation to all parishioners. Through the loving intercession of the Blessed Mother, the community continues to find strength, hope, and renewed faith in the power of prayer. **Evelyn Jock**

## Letters to Editor

### Seeking clarification on Myanmar humanitarian mission

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the letter *Call for transparency on Lenten campaign funds* from Solomon Gideon Chong published in *HERALD*, September 7, 2025.

Please accept my apologies for the delayed response, as I only recently came across the *Letters to the Editor* section while clearing the *HERALD* in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

Thank you to Dr Gary Liew as well for your detailed explanation regarding the management of the Lenten Campaign funds and the work undertaken by AOHD. I appreciate the clarity you have provided on the processes involved, as well as your emphasis on transparency and accountability.

I would like to kindly request some further clarification from AOHD regarding the Myanmar humanitarian mission that you mentioned.

You noted that all overseas trips undertaken by AOHD are “funded separately” and that staff members personally cover at least 70 per cent of their travel expenses, with any shortfall subsidised by private donors. Could you please clarify the source of funding for the Myanmar trip, including whether these were private donations collected under a specific campaign or appeal, whether the funds received approval

from the Archbishop, and whether any Chancery Notice was issued for this mission, and when was the Chancery Notice issued, if any?

I would also appreciate more details regarding the composition of the team deployed to Mandalay:

How many individuals were part of this mission, and what were their respective roles or affiliations?

Was the team composed solely of AOHD staff, or did it include volunteers or members from partner organisations?

Finally, to promote full transparency and accountability, could you please provide an indication of the total expenditure for the Myanmar trip, along with a breakdown (if possible) of how the funds were utilised (e.g., travel, accommodation, relief supplies, etc.)?

I believe these details would help stakeholders, including parishioners and supporters, better understand how such overseas missions are planned, financed, and executed. Your clarification will also strengthen confidence in AOHD's stewardship of resources and its ongoing humanitarian work.

Thank you once again for your dedication and for taking the time to address these queries. I look forward to your response.

Cassandra  
via email

### AOHD's response

Dear Editor,

In response to the queries by Ms Cassandra, the Myanmar Earthquake Relief Mission was a joint initiative between AOHD and United Sikhs, albeit it was United Sikhs who took on the role to arrange all logistics, travel, food and accommodation. The cost of which was borne solely by them, I take it they had their own donors for this. The team comprised of 10 persons, with me being the only one from AOHD, as the time to apply for a humanitarian visa from the Ministry was relatively short, given the urgency to get into Myanmar within a week from the earthquake.

The funds which our local archdiocese had collected totalling RM183,984.21 was 100 per cent donated directly to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar (CBCM) as per the request of His Eminence Cardinal Charles Bo and this was the decision made by our Archbishop Julian Leow. I am unfamiliar if this warrants a Chancery Notice, but I do remember the total amount collected being published in

the *HERALD* ‘Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur extends support to Myanmar earthquake survivors’ (October 26, 2025). I believe the CBCM had formally acknowledged the amount received which a year later they are due to send a report to the bishops detailing the breakdown as to where the funds were sent and how it was used. AOHD has also requested for the report and are still awaiting a response.

The team deployed to Mandalay comprised of three doctors, one medical officer from Red Crescent and six other volunteers chosen by United Sikhs for their ability to organise, coordinate and execute in the areas of food distribution, medical camps, constructing of temporary shelters and the distribution and installation of hygiene kits and water filters for clean drinking water respectively.

I do hope this sheds more light on the Myanmar Earthquake Relief Mission, at least where our local Church was involved in. Thank you for your concern and continued humanitarian support in solidarity of our neighbours.

Dr Gary Liew



Send your letters to ► [letterseditor@herald.com.my](mailto:letterseditor@herald.com.my)

The Editor, *HERALD*, 5 Jalan Robertson, 50150 KL | Please include your name and address. *Letters without name and address will not be entertained.*

# STONYHURST PENANG

FOUNDED BY STONYHURST COLLEGE, UK

*Stonyhurst is a Catholic school rooted in the Jesuit tradition, dedicated to forming young men and women for others. Guided by faith and the Ignatian values, we nurture our pupils in competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment, enabling them to live with purpose for the greater glory of God and in service of the Common Good.*



**100% Scholarship\***

Covers tuition fees & accommodation

Two-year A Level (starting Aug 2026)

**APPLY NOW**

\*depending on financial status

## Leading IGCSE & A Level International School in Penang



2025 IGCSE A\* - B



Short stint to Stonyhurst College, UK & visit to leading universities in UK



Guided by Ignatius Values



Over 800 Pupils from 34 Countries



25 Pupils per Class



Over 160 Extra Curricular Activities



70% Expatriate Teachers



Foreign Languages



Guidance to apply for tertiary university scholarship



NEW Sea Sports Academy



Daily Mass & Weekly Holy Hour

## Pathway to Your Dream Universities and being men and women for others

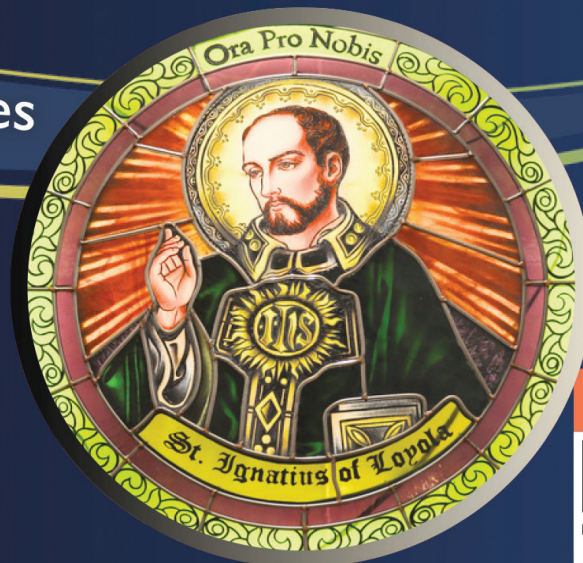
4 Foundation Pillars

Academic Excellence

Faith That Does Justice

Perspectives & Horizons

Sustainability & Accessibility



Learn More



For enquiries: [Admissions@StonyhurstPenang.edu.my](mailto:Admissions@StonyhurstPenang.edu.my) | WhatsApp + (60) 12 663 1850

# Pope: End war, return to dialogue

VATICAN NEWS: Pope Leo XIV has renewed his urgent appeal for peace, calling on world leaders — including US President Donald Trump — to return to dialogue and seek concrete solutions to end ongoing conflicts.

Speaking to journalists on March 31 in Castel Gandolfo, the Pope urged leaders to “come back to the table” and resolve their differences through negotiation rather than violence. Referring to recent remarks by Trump expressing a desire to end the war, Pope Leo said he hopes leaders are seeking an “off-ramp” — a way to reduce violence and end the cycle of hatred that continues to grow in the Middle East and beyond.

His appeal took on deeper urgency as the Church entered Holy Week. During Palm Sunday Mass at St Peter’s Square, the Pope issued a strong and uncompromising message: God cannot be invoked to justify war.

“God does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war,”

he said, firmly rejecting any attempt to use religion as a justification for violence.

Reflecting on Christ’s Passion, Pope Leo presented Jesus as the true “King of Peace” — one who did not resist with force, but embraced suffering with meekness and love. “He did not arm himself, defend himself, or wage war,” the Pope said. Instead, Christ revealed the face of a God who rejects violence and calls humanity to reconciliation.

The Pope contrasted Christ’s humility with the violence that continues to afflict the world today. In the suffering of Christ, he said, we see the suffering of humanity — especially the innocent victims of war. “In His wounds, we see the wounds of so many women and men today,” he said, particularly those oppressed by conflict and violence.

Quoting the Gospel, he recalled Jesus’ words to Peter: “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword,” underscoring the futility



Smoke rises after a reported Israeli airstrike, amid escalating hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as the US-Israel war with Iran continues, in the southern suburbs of Beirut, March 28, 2026. (OSV News photo/Raghad Waked, Reuters)

of violence and the urgent need for peace.

At the *Angelus*, Pope Leo once again turned attention to those most affected by war, especially Christians in the Middle East who are unable to fully celebrate Holy Week due to ongoing conflict. Their suffering, he said, is a powerful reminder that



He called on the faithful to pray for victims of war and for leaders to have the courage to pursue reconciliation. He also expressed hope that a truce might at least be observed during Easter — a sign of goodwill and a step towards lasting peace.

Entrusting his appeal to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Pope prayed that the tears of all victims of violence may soon be wiped away. **Agencies**

## ‘Use your anointed hands to bless’



ARUSHA, Tanzania: Priests are set apart for a sacred mission — to celebrate the Sacraments, reconcile God’s people, and lead lives rooted in prayer. This was the message of Archbishop Isaac Amani of Arusha, *pic*, at the Chrism Mass celebrated at St Theresa’s Cathedral.

In his homily, Archbishop Amani reflected on the dignity and responsibility of the priestly vocation, urging priests to live authentically what they proclaim. “Priests are more credible when they put into practice what they teach, not only when they guide people by words,” he said, calling



them to lives of prayer, integrity, and harmony within their parish communities.

He reminded the congregation that priesthood is not limited to the ordained. Through baptism, all the faithful share in the “common priesthood” of Christ — called to participate in His mission as priest, prophet, and king. This baptismal calling, he noted, enables laypeople to sanctify the world through

their daily lives, prayer, and work, offering spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God. While distinct from the ministerial priesthood, it remains essential to the life and mission of the Church.

Turning once more to the clergy, Archbishop Amani spoke of the profound significance of their anointed hands. These hands, he said, are called to bless, sanctify, reconcile, and bring healing — especially through the celebration of the Church’s sacred mysteries.

He also encouraged the faithful to support their priests through prayer, asking that they remain faithful to their vows and commitments. At the same time, he urged all Christians to deepen their own spiritual lives through Scripture, prayer, and participation in formation programmes and gatherings.

Archbishop Amani concluded by calling for unity within the archdiocese, as the faithful prepare for the consecration of a new cathedral on August 7, 2026. The long-awaited cathedral, now nearing completion after nearly 15 years of construction, stands as a sign of hope and renewal for the local Church. **Vatican News**

## Indian Catholics demand bishops fluent in local language

BANGALORE: A group of Catholics in India’s southern Karnataka state has launched a campaign urging that bishops appointed to its 14 dioceses be proficient in Kannada, the state’s official language, and that it be adopted more widely in the liturgy.

Around 300 Catholics gathered at a public park in Bangalore on March 28, calling on Church authorities to recognise Kannada as a primary language in sacramental celebrations, including the Eucharist.

“We have been pushing for these changes for quite some time, but have received no response from the Church hierarchy. That is why we decided to take this step,” said Rita Rene, spokesperson for the organising group, Akhil Karnataka Catholic Christian Kannada Sangha.

The group claims to represent Kannada-speaking Catholics across the state, where about 60 per cent of the population of 61 million uses Kannada as its primary language.

The issue, particularly in the Bangalore archdiocese, has persisted for over three decades. Kannada-speaking Catholics have long voiced concerns that their language is often sidelined in favour of Tamil and Konkani, which

are spoken by significant Catholic communities in certain parishes.

Responding to the concerns, Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore acknowledged that a bishop “should certainly be fluent in the language spoken by the majority of his flock,” while also being conversant with other languages present in the diocese.

However, he clarified that the Church does not select bishops based solely on language, caste, or ethnicity. While local bishops may recommend candidates, the final decision rests with the Vatican, which considers a broader set of criteria.

He added that the bishops’ council would respect the sentiments expressed, even as the Holy See maintains a comprehensive process in the appointment of bishops.

Addressing the gathering, parliamentarian and writer I.Hanumanthaiah suggested that clergy unfamiliar with the local language undergo at least six months of functional language training before assuming office.

“The bond between God and the faithful should not be hindered by language,” he said, stressing that there should be no divide between the language of worship and the language of the people. **ucanews.com**



(DH Photo/Kishor Kumar)

**JOBITA HOME AN ASSISTED-LIVING (002748156-K)**  
**CATHOLIC ELDERLY CARE HOME**

The Spiritual needs of our Residents are met in a Fully-Catholic Comfortable environment by our Catholic Caregivers

- HOLY COMMUNION Every Sunday
- Occasional Mass is celebrated, Confessions and Anointing by Catholic Priests
- Hospital Accompaniment with Caregivers
- Healthy Meals
- Gentle Exercises
- Affordable & Reasonable Rates

No.140 Jalan 14/15, Section 14, 46100, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia  
For further enquiries:  
Kindly Call John : 016-2167751



# Renewal takes root in a changing Church

In this 12th instalment, we take a look at how the Church in Peninsular Malaysia deepens its post-1986 renewal journey, embracing a shared vision of "A New Way of Being Church" while preparing spiritually and pastorally for PMPC II and the challenges of a new millennium.

Richard Chia

The years following the Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Convention (PMPC I) in 1986 marked a quiet but decisive turning point for the Church in Peninsular Malaysia. In the wake of that gathering, the Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Team (PMPT) undertook a careful review — listening not only to the formal deliberations of the convention, but also to the voices gathered through surveys and grassroots consultations. What emerged from this process was not a single directive, but a dual vision that would shape the Church's journey into the closing years of the twentieth century.

First, there arose a pressing need to deepen and unify the Church's understanding of renewal as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council. It became evident that clergy, religious, and laity alike did not always share a common grasp of its teachings. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the development of Basic Christian Communities (BCCs). Without a shared vision, these communities had often evolved into task-oriented or cell-like groups, each interpreting "community" in its own way. The PMPT recognised that a more coordinated and intentional effort was needed—one that would root these communities firmly in the ecclesial spirit of Vatican II.

The second thrust looked forward rather than inward. The Church was called to embark on a process of dialogue and discernment, one that would prepare it spiritually and pastorally for the dawning of a new era: the third millennium and

the Jubilee Year 2000. This was not merely about planning events, but about shaping a Church ready to meet the future with clarity of identity and mission.

## A New Way of Being Church

It was within this broader movement of renewal that a significant development emerged at the continental level. During the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), held in Bandung, Indonesia from July 17–27, 1990, a compelling vision was articulated—"A New Way of Being Church." This phrase captured the imagination of many, offering a framework that resonated deeply with the realities of Asia in the 1990s.

In its final statement, the assembly declared:

*"The Church in Asia will have to be a communion of communities, where laity, religious and clergy recognise and accept each other as sisters and brothers. They are called together by the Word of God which, regarded as a quasi-sacramental presence of the Risen Lord, leads them to form small Christian communities (e.g., neighbourhood groups, Basic Ecclesial Communities and covenant communities). There, they pray and share together the Gospel of Jesus, living it in their daily lives as they support one another and work together, united as they are in one mind and heart"*

It goes on to envision how a Church in Asia should look like: *"It is a participatory Church where the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to all the faithful -- lay, religious and cleric alike -- are recognised and activated, so that the Church may be built up and its mission realized. Built in the hearts of*

*Newbec*  
NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH

**NEWBEC**

*people, it is a Church that faithfully and lovingly witnesses to the Risen Lord Jesus and reaches out to people of other faiths and persuasions in a dialogue of life toward the integral liberation of all. It is a leaven of transformation in this world and serves as a prophetic sign daring to point beyond this world to the ineffable Kingdom that is yet fully to come"*

Though the FABC did not impose its recommendations, the bishops of Peninsular Malaysia discerned in this vision a path forward. In principle, they embraced "A New Way of Being Church" as the foundation for renewing and strengthening their local communities.

This shift soon found expression in language as well as practice. By 1993, the term "Basic Christian Communities" began to give way to "Basic Ecclesial Communities" (BECs), underscoring their identity as expressions of the Church itself. The change was not merely semantic. It addressed a growing concern that, in the absence of clear guidelines, some communities had modelled themselves too closely on the structures of other Christian groups.

BECs were thus rearticulated with a distinctive ecclesial character: communities formed not by voluntary membership, but by shared life and proximity. One major difference highlighted in BECs is that the ecclesial community are comprised of the people of God living in the same vicinity, and that one does not need to "join." Every baptised Catholic within a neighbourhood already belonged. These were not gatherings defined by agendas or speakers, but living communities — spaces where faith was shared, prayer was lived, and relationships were nurtured in the rhythm of daily life.

Despite numerous efforts by Church leaders to clarify and promote this vision, a coherent and unified understanding only began to take root with the publication of the first official Guidelines for BECs in 1998.



Families come together for a BEC gathering.

## Preparation for PMPC II

Meanwhile, even as these ideas were taking root, the Church in Peninsular Malaysia was already setting its sights on a second defining moment — PMPC II. The journey towards it began in 1993 with the formation of a dedicated inter-diocesan team, bringing together representatives from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, the Diocese of Penang, and the Diocese of Malacca-Johore. This was not merely an organising committee, but a body entrusted with shaping the spiritual and pastoral direction of the Church in the years ahead.

What followed unfolded almost like a carefully orchestrated pilgrimage. In 1994, study days on ecclesiology invited deeper reflection on the nature and identity of the Church itself. The momentum continued into 1995 with inter-diocesan study sessions and diocesan-wide assemblies, where insights were shared and refined across local communities. By 1996, the pace had intensified: clergy gathered for formation across dioceses, religious communities came together in dialogue, and a second diocesan assembly in May helped consolidate the fruits of these

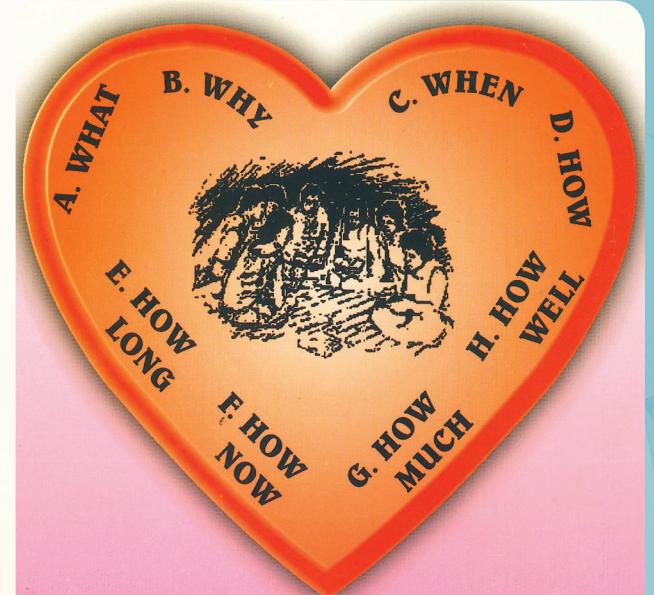
years of preparation.

All these efforts converged toward a single moment. PMPC II was scheduled to take place from August 30 to September 2, 1996 at the then Majowe Centre in Plentong, Johore — a gathering not simply planned, but patiently prepared through years of listening, learning, and discerning together.

At the heart of this preparation was a study guide titled *Towards a New Way of Being Church in Malaysia*. It invited Catholics at every level — individually and in small groups — to reflect deeply on their identity and mission. Whether among BEC leaders, parish councils, or ordinary faithful, the guide served as both a mirror and a map.

Two questions, in particular, echoed throughout this period of reflection:

- How do we prepare ourselves for the Jubilee Year 2000?
- What does it mean to be "A New Way of Being an evangelising Church" in the context of trends of present-day Malaysia?



**IMPLEMENTING A NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH  
RENEWING OUR CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN LIFE  
RESTRUCTURING THE TRADITIONAL PARISH  
TRANSFORMING OUR PARISHES  
INTO  
A COMMUNION OF COMMUNITIES**

Deacon Prof Dr Sherman Kuek OFS

We often measure the vitality of the Catholic Church in Malaysia by the vibrancy of its youth programmes, the attendance at student catechism, and the number of First Communicants and Confirmants. There is a persistent and understandable anxiety regarding the spiritual formation of the younger generation. Many parishes dedicate the lion's share of their resources, volunteer hours, and physical space to ensure that children receive the sacraments of initiation. These perceived successes are also accompanied by frequent anxieties over the struggling parish catechism ministries and their catechists' lack of competence.

### The hidden crisis: Adult faith formation neglected

The weakness of the catechism ministry for the young is likely a symptom of a much deeper, more systemic deficiency. It is becoming increasingly evident that the weakest link in the life of the Church today is the lack of ongoing, systematic, and comprehensive adult catechesis. The root of the problem is likely not found in the catechism classroom, but rather, in the pews occupied by those who have long since reached adulthood.

This is by no means a contemporary observation unique to the Malaysian context. Nearly five decades ago, Pope St John Paul II identified this very issue as a matter of global urgency. In his *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), he noted that the synod fathers of the 1977 Synod of Bishops were preoccupied with the "central problem of the catechesis of adults." He stated: "I cannot fail to emphasise now one of the most constant concerns of the synod fathers, a concern imposed with vigour and urgency by present experiences throughout the world: I am referring to the central problem of the catechesis of adults. This is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. The Christian community cannot carry out a permanent catechesis without the direct and skilled participation of adults, whether as receivers or as promoters of catechetical activity" (CT 43).

### The Malaysian reality: Catechesis as an afterthought

Despite this clear papal direction, it appears that little serious effort has been made to institutionalise comprehensive adult catechesis in Malaysia. Where it is provided, it is presented as a mere add-on rather than an expected norm in adult Catholic life. We find ourselves in a situation where many adults in the Malaysian Church remain effectively uncatechised. They are often what the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) describes as "the simple people" who express themselves "with sincere religious feeling and deep rooted 'popular devotion.'" These individuals "possess a certain faith, 'but know little even of its fundamental principles.'" Equally

# Sustained adult catechesis

## An imperative for missionary discipleship

concerning, and perhaps more common in our urban centres, are the "numerous other Christians, often highly educated, whose religious formation amounts solely to that which they received in childhood." As the *Directory* notes, "these also need to re-examine and develop their faith" (GDC 25).

### Ripple effects on vocations and leadership

This deficit in adult catechesis is so pervasive, it cannot help but affect other aspects of our ecclesial life. We see young men being enrolled into the seminary who, despite their genuine desire to serve, often arrive without the benefit of a basic understanding of the framework of the faith. When the foundational structures of doctrine and tradition are not established during the formative adult years prior to vocational discernment, the seminary is forced to play a remedial role. This cannot be good for the Church; it places an undue burden on priestly formation and risks producing a clergy that must struggle to master the basics while simultaneously preparing for the complexities of pastoral leadership.

### Listening without formation: The limits of synodality

In recent years, the Church has been engaged in a rigorous conversation regarding synodality, emphasising the importance of listening to one another and accompanying individuals and families in the challenges they face. While this pastoral listening is indispensable, it remains incomplete if it is not coupled with the light of Truth. We wish to hear the struggles of the faithful, yet the only thing that can truly illuminate their path and bring about lasting transformation is properly delivered adult catechesis. Without a robust formation, the faithful may continue to receive the Sacraments, but they will lack the accompanying Christian worldview necessary to cooperate with the graces they receive. St Thomas Aquinas himself spoke extensively on the necessity of our cooperation with divine grace; if the intellect is not informed by the truths of the faith, the will is poorly equipped to act upon the supernatural help provided by God.

The necessity for systematic adult catechesis is not merely a matter of personal enrichment; it is an essential requirement for the very existence of a fully Christian community. The document *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (1990) asserts that "it is not only legitimate, but necessary, to acknowledge that a fully Christian community can exist only when a systematic catechesis of all its members takes place and when an effective and well-developed catechesis of adults is regarded as the central task in the



(Splendour Project facebook)

catechetical enterprise" (ACCC 25). If the adult members of a parish are not continually being formed, the entire community suffers a form of spiritual malnutrition. Without this ongoing formation, the laity cannot hope to fulfil their specific vocation of sanctifying the temporal order.

### Building without a foundation: Impact on the young

The *Directory for Catechesis* (2020) reinforces this by identifying adult catechesis as the "chief form" of all catechetical activity. It argues that since it "deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible," it "must be considered the chief form of catechesis." Consequently, "all the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it," implying that "the catechesis of other age groups should have [adult catechesis] for a point of reference" (DC 77). When we prioritise children's classes to the exclusion of adult formation, we are essentially building a house without a foundation. Children learn the faith not only through formal instruction but by witnessing a mature, lived faith in their parents and elders. If the adults lack a robust understanding of the Gospel, the formation of the young will inevitably remain superficial and fragile.

In many Malaysian parishes, what little adult formation exists is often ad hoc and lacks the necessary depth in doctrinal and moral understanding. We frequently rely on seminars focusing on isolated topics, Lenten talks, or parish missions that, although well-intentioned, do not provide the sustained, systematic instruction required for true conversion and intellectual maturity. This creates a grave imbalance that cannot be neutralised by way of one-off discipleship courses. As noted in *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (1990), "one must admit that in various communities, the formation of adults has been taken for granted or perhaps carried out in connection with certain events, not infrequently in an infantile way." Because "certain external or traditional supports are sometimes lacking, a grave imbalance is created insofar as catechesis has devoted considerable attention to children while the same has not happened in the catechesis of young people and adults" (ACCC 21).

### What true adult catechesis requires

For the Church in Malaysia to move forward, we must reconsider what it means to be a catechised adult. This formation cannot be restricted to mere pious sentiments or social activism. It must be comprehensive and systematic. According to the 1990 document on adult catechesis, instruction "has to present in a comprehensive and systematic way the great themes of the Christian religion which

involve faith and reasons for believing." This includes "the mystery of God and the Trinity, Christ, the Church, the sacraments, human life and ethical principles, eschatological realities, and other contemporary themes in religion and morality" (ACCC 43).

It would certainly be realistic to acknowledge that such an undertaking is not a task for a single season or a solitary pastoral term. This is an effort that will take decades, and perhaps even generations, to bear full fruit. It involves shifting the entire culture of our parishes from a mindset of "graduation" to one of perpetual and ongoing discipleship. Although the road ahead is long, the work has to begin somewhere. There is no better time than now to lay the first stones of this foundation. If we delay, we only ensure that the next generation of adults, including our future seminarians and leaders, will be as poorly equipped as the present one.

### The cost of inaction for future generations

The challenge for the Malaysian Church is to move beyond a model of mere sacramental preparation and toward a model of lifelong missionary discipleship. We must move away from the notion that religious education ends with the Sacrament of Confirmation. If we wish to see our parishes transformed into missionary communities, we must first ensure that the adults who lead these communities are themselves deeply rooted in the Apostolic Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. Although the logistical hurdles of implementing systematic adult catechesis are significant – this in addition to the seemingly overwhelming challenge of transforming the prevalent mindset among clergy, religious, and laity – the cost of ignoring this imperative is bound to be higher. We ought to love our spiritual descendants enough to worry about the harm that present inaction could do to their faith. Without a well-formed laity, the Church's ability to engage with our subsequent generations and with Malaysian society as a whole, our ability to give an account for the Christian hope that is within us, will remain severely diminished.

It is time for us to heed the long-standing call of the universal Church, to elevate adult catechesis from a peripheral concern to the very heart of our mission. Only when we have an adult population that is truly "skilled in the participation of catechetical activity" (CT 43) will we see the fruits of a renewed and resilient faith in the generations that follow. By addressing this weakest link, we ensure that the faith is not merely a set of rules learned in youth, but a living, breathing reality that informs every aspect of mature Catholic life.

*Deacon Dr Sherman is the head of the Diocesan Catechetical Ministry for the Malacca Johore Diocese.*



(Splendour Project facebook)

**Bob Ho**

KUALA LUMPUR: For Christopher Wan, retirement was never an ending, it was a calling renewed.

After 39 years of dedicated service in the Royal Malaysia Police, culminating as Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, Datuk Christopher Wan could have chosen a quieter life. Instead, he embarked on a new mission: to protect society not by pursuing criminals, but by empowering ordinary people to outsmart them.

“Prevention is better than cure,” he often says — a principle that now defines his life’s work.

Christopher speaks of his mission with quiet conviction. “My inspiration came from God,” he shared during his talk *Be Streetwise*, organised by the Golden Eagles of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist last month.

Grateful for the years he spent in service, he now feels a responsibility to give back — by sharing the knowledge and experience he gained on the frontlines of crime. For him, this is more than education; it is an act of care.

“It is important that we look out for one another and remain mindful for each other,” he said.

**A moment that sparked a movement**

This new chapter began in 2021 at the Montfort Youth Centre in Air Salak, Melaka. Invited to speak to a group of young graduates emerging from the isolation of the pandemic, Christopher encountered something that deeply moved him — their innocence.

These youth had spent months cut off from the outside world. As they prepared to step into society, he realised they lacked the streetwise instincts needed to navigate its dangers.

“I felt compelled to teach them how to survive the real world,” he recalled.

That moment became a turning point. What began as a single talk soon grew into a mission reaching schools, universities, churches, and community organisations — touching lives across generations.

**Equipping minds, protecting lives**

In his sessions, Christopher does not merely speak — he equips. Drawing from real cases and lived experience, he opens people’s eyes to threats that often go unnoticed until it is



# A mission to keep society safe

too late.

At his recent sharing, he addressed a wide range of dangers: cybercrime, scams, road bullying, harassment, and even the risks of becoming an unwitting drug mule.

The scale of the problem is sobering. Citing parliamentary reports, he highlighted staggering financial losses from online scams — RM2.77 billion in 2025 alone.

Behind these numbers are real lives disrupted, families affected, and trust broken.

**The many faces of deception**

Christopher explains that scams are not random — they are calculated. Each one follows a strategy designed to manipulate emotions.

There is the investment scam, promising quick and extraordinary returns. The Macau scam, which uses fear before offering a false escape. The love scam, preying on loneliness with carefully crafted online personas.

Despite their differences, they share a



common thread: they exploit trust.

His advice is simple, yet powerful: Adopt a zero-trust mindset.

Pause. Verify. Speak to someone you trust.

“Scammers will pressure you to act immediately,” he warns. “But wisdom often begins with the courage to wait.”

**Courage in the face of confrontation**

Beyond scams, Christopher also speaks about everyday dangers — like road bullies.

He paints a vivid picture: aggressive driving, tailgating, sudden braking, angry gestures. In such moments, instinct may push one toward confrontation. But Christopher urges restraint.

“Stay calm. Do not engage. Keep your distance. Your safety is more important than your pride.”

Even small habits — locking car doors, keeping windows slightly open, heading to a police station when in doubt — can make a critical difference.

**Breaking the illusion of easy money**

Another danger he highlights is the lure of loan sharks, or Ah Long. What begins with friendly promises of easy cash often spirals into a nightmare of debt, harassment, and fear.

“They start with soft words,” he says, “but once you are hooked, they will keep you there.”

His message is clear: avoid the trap before it begins.

**Wisdom for everyday living**

At the heart of Christopher’s message is not fear, but wisdom.

He encourages a life anchored in simplicity, integrity, and discernment:

- Live simply. Do not be driven by greed.
- Be mindful of the company you keep.
- Stay away from unlawful paths, no matter how tempting they appear.

These are not just safety tips — they are principles for a life well lived.

Christopher has also captured his insights in writing, authoring three books on crime prevention. His latest, *Be Streetwise*, was gifted to those present at the talk — a gesture that reflects his generosity and desire to keep educating beyond the stage.

As attendees queued patiently for his autograph, there was a sense that they were not just meeting a former police officer, but a man still deeply committed to serving society.

Parish priest, Fr Gerard Theraviam, aptly described the talk as timely, noting how scams have become an ever-present threat.

**Once a cop, always a guardian**

There is an old saying: Once a cop, always a cop.

For Christopher Wan, this rings profoundly true.

In his years of service, he protected society by bringing criminals to justice. Today, he protects it by strengthening its people — arming them with awareness, wisdom, and courage.

His mission reminds us that safety is not only the responsibility of authorities, but a shared duty. And when knowledge is passed on, when vigilance is cultivated, and when communities look out for one another, society becomes not just safer — but stronger.

In a world filled with unseen dangers, his message shines with clarity and hope: Be alert. Be wise. Be streetwise.

## A marketplace of dignity

### Caritas Bazaar Amal 2026

JOHOR BAHRU: At the MAJODI Centre in Plentong, something beautiful unfolded on a recent Sunday morning. The Caritas Bazaar Amal 2026 was a living witness of what happens when a community chooses compassion, dignity, and joy.

Organised by POHD St Joseph, Plentong under Caritas Malacca Johore Diocese, this gathering brought together hearts and hands from across parishes — youth and adults alike from the parishes of St Joseph, Sacred Heart Cathedral, St Elizabeth Kota Tinggi, and St Theresa Masai, alongside the Creation Justice Commission. Their shared mission was simple, yet profound: to welcome, accompany, and uplift our migrant brothers and sisters, especially those working in the Plentong area.

From the early hours of the morning, more than 60 volunteers came together — not merely to set up stalls, but to build a space where every person would feel seen, valued, and at home. There was a quiet understanding among them: this was not about transactions, but transformation. Not about profit, but about presence. Each stall became a place of encounter, each interaction an opportunity to affirm a simple truth — you

belong here.

What made this bazaar truly special was its heart. Instead of a distribution line, it offered a marketplace of dignity. Here, individuals and families could choose what they needed, reclaiming a sense of agency and self-worth. This seemingly small shift carried deep meaning — because dignity is restored when choice is given.

Smiling “hospitality ambassadors” guided visitors through the space, ensuring no one felt lost or overwhelmed. A first aid team stood ready in quiet service. And at every turn, the atmosphere spoke louder than words — joy, warmth, and genuine care.

The entrance itself set the tone. Young cheerleaders, full of life, welcomed each person with song, dance, and radiant smiles. Their energy filled the space and lifted every spirit. As visitors browsed through thoughtfully arranged items — clothing, household goods, toys, and more — they were also reminded, through the Creation Justice corner, that caring for one another goes hand in hand with caring for our common home.

Throughout the day, something extraordinary happened in ordinary ways. A



shirt found a new owner. A child discovered a toy. A family shared a quiet moment of gratitude. And every single person — regardless of what they carried in their hands — left carrying something greater in their hearts: the experience of being welcomed and respected.

Even as the day drew to a close, the joy did not fade. Each departing guest was met with applause, songs of thanks, and heartfelt farewells. It was a celebration not just of what was given, but of what was shared — human connection, compassion, and hope.

The success of Caritas Bazaar Amal 2026

was not measured in numbers, but in moments. It was found in the laughter of volunteers, the courage of those who came, and the unity of a Church alive in mission. The presence of youth added a vibrant reminder that the future of such service is bright — full of energy, creativity, and faith in action.

On that Sunday in Plentong, the Gospel was not only proclaimed — it was lived. It reminded us that no one walks alone, that every person has dignity, and that when a community comes together with love at its centre, something truly transformative takes place.

# On my knees

A friend of mine recently sent me a video that has been living rent-free in my head ever since. It told the story of a painting hanging in the National Gallery in London of a masterpiece by a famous Italian Renaissance artist. It portrayed Mother Mary holding baby Jesus, with saints on either side, all gathered in worship.

There was once a very distinguished art critic who stood in front of the painting for a long time. He studied every detail, the brush strokes, the colours, the technique. He could clearly see the brilliance. But something felt... off. He noticed what all the other critics had pointed out before. The hills in the background looked like they were about to slide out of the painting. The saints looked stiff and uncomfortable. And Mary's eyes ... they seemed lifeless and distant.

He was puzzled. How could such a great artist get it so wrong? Then he had a thought. What if the problem wasn't the painting, but how he was looking at it? What if the painting was never meant to be viewed in a gallery, but from a place of prayer? Almost instinctively, he went down on his knees.

This time, when he looked up again, everything changed. The hills stretched beautifully into the horizon. The saints were no longer awkward, but in reverent awe. And Mary's eyes were glistening and alive. They were focused, looking straight at him. Same painting. Different posture. Different point of view.

I don't know about

you, but this story hit me a little too personally. My first thought was — why do I not get down on my knees to pray anymore?

Remember, the art critic did not discover a new painting; nothing about the masterpiece changed. What changed was his posture. When he moved from standing in judgment to kneeling in humility, his whole perspective shifted. What once seemed flawed became full of beauty and life.

So often we stand before God trying to figure everything out, critiquing, analysing, even doubting. We look at our own lives and see unanswered prayers, delays, disappointments. From that position, things can feel incomplete, even simply wrong.

I think many of us, myself very much included, have gotten a bit too casual with our faith. Mass, for example, has become casually comfortable and while at times that feels nice, it can also be a little uncomfortable. Somewhere along the way, we have lost our sense of reverence. We dress for church like we're "just dropping by." What happened to dressing our Sunday best? And the Rosary? At times it's prayed half-sitting, half-slouching, more out of routine than devotion. I remember as a kid praying the Rosary on our knees, as a family. Back when our posture itself was a

prayer. And my personal favourite struggle — my morning and night prayers. Most days I say them just lying in bed. Does God understand? I'm sure He does. But I also know He deserves more reverence than me trying to pray while fighting to stay awake. I don't know what happened, but I remember as a young girl I used to kneel properly by my bed, no shortcuts, no multitasking. Just me and God. Now, if I manage to stay awake till the end of the prayer, I count it as a win.

This article isn't about guilt. Or suddenly becoming ultra intense overnight. It's just a gentle nudge of realisation. Maybe we've gotten a little too relaxed with God. We remember that He is our Father, which is beautiful, but we sometimes forget that He is also the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the One who conquered death.

And the truth is, we were born to live with reverence. Our lives were never meant to be casual or unintentional; they are meant to be lived on our knees, humble, attentive and aware of the holiness that surrounds us. When we kneel, we remind ourselves that we are in the presence of Someone much greater than ourselves. One who is alive, loving and deserving of our full attention. It's in that posture, with humility and respect, that we can truly see, hear and encounter Him.

And so maybe, just maybe,

posture matters more than we think. Not because God needs it, but because we do. Because when we kneel physically and in reverence, when we surrender, trust and look again with faith, everything changes.

Just like that painting, our lives may not always make sense at first glance. But when we change our posture, when we choose to see through the lens of reverence and faith, we begin to notice something we missed before, God has been at work all along. And what once felt "off" begins to reveal a quiet, beautiful purpose.

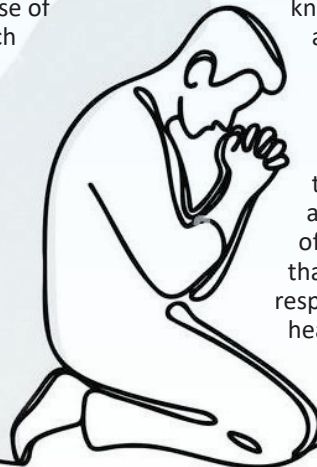
I write this not as someone who has it all figured out, but as someone who is still learning, still slipping, still trying and very often still failing. Let us get back on our knees, not out of force or habit, but with intention. And look again. Look at Him, not from a distance, not casually, but with the kind of awe that reminds our hearts who He really is. The One who chose the Cross. The One who conquered death. The One who rose, for you and for me.

*Tianne identifies first as a Catholic daughter, sister, wife and mother. From years in the media industry, she eventually started and continues to run her own businesses while teaching part-time. She has been actively serving in church for as far back as she can remember and is involved in various charities.*



## A Blessed Life

Tianne Pereira



Over dinner one evening, my mother asked, "Why is it that you've never had a proper relationship?"

I remember pausing, caught off guard. Then she added, "With so many fish in the sea, you haven't even caught one. Why is that?"

My mother was not being unkind. She was, in her own way, genuinely curious. But in that moment, what I heard was not curiosity, but disappointment.

Months later, standing at her wake, that memory returned uninvited. A friend from church came up to me and said, "You're the daughter she was asking us to help find a boyfriend for."

It stayed with me. Over time, I began to see it differently. My mother was not judging me. She was looking out for me.

It surfaced again at my new job, when I was asked to fill in a simple field: Emergency contact.

For as long as I can remember, that answer had always been my mother. Without her, there was no obvious name to write down. I found myself asking friends, somewhat awkwardly, if one of them might stand in for something that once felt so certain, until one said yes.

Then, while finalising her estate, another realisation surfaced: I had to rewrite my own Will.

I had left everything to my mother, without ever questioning it. It had always seemed natural that she would be there.

But she is no longer here.

Without dependents and without close family to turn to, every decision felt deliberate.

I found myself confronting questions I had long set aside. What happens if I

## Seen before the need

were to become mentally diminished? Who would speak on my behalf, carry both the legal responsibility and the quiet moral burden of those choices?

These are not abstract considerations when there is no obvious person to name.

Each line forced me to consider my relationships. Who knows me well enough? Who would honour not just what I say, but what I mean?

And perhaps most unsettling of all, who would stand in that space simply because they care?

In the absence of clear answers, the exercise became less about distribution and more about fear of the future.

There is a line I have held onto in the months since my mother left me: "My past, O Lord, to Your mercy; my present, to Your love; my future, to Your providence."

It is this "providence" that brings me to the Wedding at Cana.

Mary knew, even before the banquet steward did, that the wine had run out.

Those of us who have helped at weddings know that it is usually the working team that notices a shortage before anyone else, certainly before the couple.

Yet here, before any quiet panic could surface, Mary, a guest of humble means, already knew.

More than that, she chose to act. She turned to her Son, interceding on behalf

of the bride and groom, so that they would be spared embarrassment. She brought the need to Jesus with a quiet confidence, trusting that He would provide.

And He did — but not in isolation.

Jewish weddings were extended, demanding affairs. For those tasked with serving, the work would have been exhausting. So, when Jesus instructed them to fill the jars with water, it was no small task.

The water had to be drawn from wells, likely some distance away, labour-intensive and repetitive, seemingly disconnected from the problem at hand.

Did they know the wine had run out? Did they think Jesus was going to attempt to stretch what little remained by mixing water with wine?

I admit to Googling the volume they must have carried; it is as much as 110 litres per jar. That is over 1,300 litres drawn by hand.

And yet, what strikes me is not just the effort, but this: all that labour, carried out quietly, before anyone else even realised there was a problem.

Perhaps that is how provision often works — unseen, already in motion before the need becomes visible.

In the months since my mother's passing, I have felt more keenly than before the absence of someone who once looked out for me without my asking, who

anticipated what I needed before I even knew to name it.

And yet, in reflecting on Cana, I am reminded that I may not be as alone as I sometimes feel.

Mary saw the lack before anyone else did. She did not wait for the problem to become urgent. She simply brought it to her Son, trusting that He would provide even if "my hour has not yet come."

And He did ... through others. Through those already present, who became part of the solution without fully knowing their role.

Perhaps that is how providence unfolds. There are, and will be, helpers in my life. People who step forward, sometimes quietly, sometimes unexpectedly. A friend who says yes to being an emergency contact. Someone who offers guidance at the right moment. Another who stands in a space I cannot yet foresee needing.

And so I hold on to this trust: that before I am even aware of what is lacking, Mary has already seen it.

That she will intercede, gently and faithfully, placing my needs before her Son.

And that through His providence, He will send the right people into my life, at the right time, to help carry what I cannot carry alone.

Just as at Cana, the need will be met.

*Agnes is a self-professed curious traveller and lifelong learner with a lamentable tendency to get into sidetracked experiences. She aspires to explore as many historical UNESCO sites as possible, funds permitting. Agnes has a travel-slash-work-slash-dump everything IG at @agnes\_gets\_sidetracked*



## Getting Sidetracked

Agnes Ong



Fr Gerard Theraviam

# No pain, no gain

## The cost of discipleship

Each year, as I prepare for Easter and the Baptisms and Entry into the Church by individuals, young and old, who have chosen to heed the promptings of God to take the journey 'Home to Rome', I do so with joy and amazement. It is always a privilege to watch the process of growth and flowering as they take on their roles and responsibilities as missionary-disciples. In listening to their stories, I am amazed at what God is doing in their lives. One wonders why they choose to come to us, especially if they have been strong adherents of other faiths. Some may be curious about Catholicism, desiring to learn what Catholics believe, especially if their lives have been touched by a devoted Catholic. I have met persons who popped into our churches, and chose to stay and later joined the RCIA. Some seek deeper spiritual meaning, looking to fill what has been a void in their lives. Some also seek community, to have people to open up and share in the lives of other like-minded persons.

Some may have joined the RCIA simply because of an impending marriage, but my prayer is that the actual journey has them convinced that, actually, God has been the one calling them and that their intentions are purified along the way. Often, the convert spouse is a great example that brings the cradle-Catholic spouse to a stronger faith themselves, especially if they have genuinely accompanied them

on the RCIA journey. And even if people have perhaps initially joined for the wrong reasons, let's remember that God is not finished with any one of us yet! We are all a work-in-progress.

However, I must also salute them all, for the journey is never without its challenges and costs. For some, it involves dealing with families and past religious leaders who have disapproved, as if to say that they are betraying their roots, breaking with culture and tradition. Some have agonised over how to break the news to parents and loved ones who mean well and think they are going the wrong way. Yet they have stayed on course, respectfully listening to the worries expressed and meanwhile assuring them that they are fully aware of what they are getting into and being responsible for their choices. Parents sometimes worry that familial ties will weaken; on the contrary, our teachings on honouring father and mother might bring to the awareness of the new convert that they need to be constantly aware of their responsibilities. Some parents may worry that their children may not want to be involved in their funerals, not realising that Catholics honour and pray for the dead, and a Catholic may indeed take part in the funeral of the adherent of another faith as long as we do not worship another deity. This is a real concern as some other Christians take a hard line approach to this, with some even going to the extreme

position of not even being present at a funeral.

Some just drop out of Catechism classes and then come to complete their Sacraments of Eucharist & Confirmation. These are people who now take faith seriously – and deserve our help.

Others may find that their conversion results in the loss of friends, although it can also open up a whole new vista of relationships with fellow believers in church circles. One individual shared of how it cost the end of a long, strong romantic relationship with someone who now did not want to be married to someone who took Christianity seriously, perhaps afraid that the new faith being espoused might take the person away or that it might clash with their own beliefs. Heartbreak indeed, but despite that pain and actual cost to the relationship, the person recognised that God's call could not be ignored and chose to embrace both pain and faith!

Someone else who had been an active member in another denomination but found themselves drawn to the Catholic faith after a chance visit had to deal with the ire of pastors and congregants who couldn't believe that they would go away, especially since some denominations would even question whether Catholics were indeed Christian – notwithstanding that the Church will lay genuine claim to apostolic foundations!

All of these persons have made me

re-visit my own commitment to Christ and His Church. Luke 14:26 quotes Jesus as teaching: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Of course, Jesus is using exaggerated language or hyperbole and not advocating hate – rather it is about putting God first and all our other relationships (and ourselves!) second. God needs to be our number one priority!

What is needed on our part is the continued accompaniment of our sisters and brothers – both spiritually and in concrete ways. Let us be there for them with love and encouragement and never be a scandal to them. Let us invite them to our BECs, ministries and even homes and families. And yes, when they fall as we all do, let us then lovingly help them rise again and continue their journey.

The period of Mystagogia leading up to Pentecost is an opportunity to pray for all our Neophytes and build bonds with them, inviting them to be integrated into our church communities. Let us rejoice with them, welcoming them into our Catholic BECs and community.

**Fr Gerard** is the parish priest of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Kuala Lumpur, as well as the Spiritual Director to the World Community for Christian Meditation, Malaysia.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

# On not being stingy with God's mercy

Shortly after my ordination, doing replacement work in a parish, I found myself in a rectory with a saintly old priest. He was over eighty, nearly blind, but widely sought out and respected. One night, alone with him, I asked him this question: "If you had your priesthood to live over again, would you do anything differently?"

From a man so full of integrity, I had fully expected that there would be no regrets. So, his answer surprised me. Yes, he did have a regret, a major one, he said: "If I had my priesthood to do over again, I would be easier on people the next time. I wouldn't be so stingy with God's mercy, with the sacraments, with forgiveness. You see what was drilled into me in the seminary was the phrase: The truth will set you free. So, I believed it was my responsibility always to give a hard challenge, and that can be good. But I fear that I was too hard on people. They have pain enough without me and the Church laying further burdens on them. *I should have risked God's mercy more!*"

This struck me because, less than a year before, as I took my final exams in the seminary, one of the priests who examined me, gave me this warning: "Be careful," he said, "never let your feelings get in the way. Don't be soft, that's wrong. Remember, hard as it is, the truth sets people free!" Sound advice, it would seem, for a young priest.

However, after fifty years in ministry, I'm more inclined to the old priest's advice: We need to risk more of God's mercy. The place of justice and truth should never be ignored, but we must risk letting the infinite, unbounded, unconditional, undeserved mercy of God flow more freely. The mercy of God is as accessible as the nearest water tap, and so we, like Isaiah, must proclaim a mercy that has no price tag: *Come, come without money, without virtue, come, drink freely of God's mercy!*

What holds us back? Why are we so hesitant in proclaiming God's inexhaustible, prodigal, indiscriminate mercy?

Partly our motives are good, noble even. The concern for truth, justice, sound orthodoxy, proper morality, public form, proper sacramental preparation, and fear of scandal, are not unimportant. Love needs to be tempered by truth, even as truth must be moderated by love.

But sometimes our motives are less noble and our hesitancy arises more out of timidity, fear, legalism, the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, and an impoverished understanding of God. Thus, no cheap grace is dispensed on our watch!

In doing this we are, I fear, misguided, less than good shepherds, out of tune with the

God that Jesus incarnated. God's mercy, as Jesus revealed it, embraces indiscriminately, like the sun that shines

equally on the good as well as the bad, the deserving and the undeserving, the initiated and the uninitiated.

One of the truly startling insights that Jesus gave us is that the mercy of God cannot not go out to everyone. It's always free, undeserved, unconditional, universal in embrace, reaching beyond all religion, custom, rubric, political affiliation, mandatory programme, ideology, and even sin itself.

For our part then, especially those of us who are parents, ministers, teachers, catechists, and elders, we must risk proclaiming the prodigal character of God's mercy.

We must not dispense God's mercy as if it were ours to dispense; dole out God's forgiveness as if it were a limited commodity; put conditions on God's love as if God needs to be protected; or cut off access to God as if we were the keeper of the heavenly gates. We aren't. If we tie God's mercy to our own timidity and fear, we limit it to the size of our own minds. A bad game.

It is interesting to note in the Gospels how the Apostles, well-meaning of course, often tried to keep certain people away from Jesus as if they weren't worthy, as if they were an affront to His holiness or would somehow taint His purity. So, they tried to send away children, prostitutes, tax collectors, known sinners, and the

uninitiated of all kinds.

Always Jesus overruled their attempts with words to this effect: "Let them come to Me. I want them to come."

Things haven't changed. Perennially, we, well-intentioned persons, for the same reasons as the Apostles, continue trying to keep certain individuals and groups away from God's mercy as it is accessible in Christian Word, Sacrament, and Community.

Jesus managed things then; I suspect that He can manage them now. God doesn't need our gatekeeping.

What God wants is for everyone, regardless of age, religion, culture, personal weakness, or lack of Christian practice, to come to the unlimited waters of divine mercy.

The renowned naturalist John Muir once challenged Christians with these words: *Why are Christians so reluctant to let animals into their stingy heaven?*

We are also, I fear, stingy with God's prodigal mercy.

**Oblate Fr Ron Rolheiser**, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He writes a weekly column that is carried in over 90 newspapers around the world. He can be contacted through his website [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

# LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER



Dear children,

In today's Gospel reading, we learn that on the Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave, He appeared to a group of His disciples.

One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with them. When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and that He was alive, Thomas said,

"I won't believe it until I see it with my own eyes. I want to put my finger in the nail-prints in His hands — and place my hand where the spear was thrust into His side".

A week later, Thomas saw Jesus. Jesus invited Thomas to touch His hands where the nails had been. He told Thomas to put his hand in the wound in His side.

Then Thomas believed! Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, you believe. Blessed are those who have not

seen and yet believe."

Children, a lot of people today won't believe that Jesus really rose from the grave because they haven't seen Him with their own two eyes.

Do you know what? It is true whether they believe it or not! You and I have never seen Jesus, but we believe. We accept Him by faith. We don't have to see Him to believe!

Aunty Eliz

Can you help St Faustina to find her way to Jesus?



**W**  
**O**  
**R**  
**D**

Y	J	M	N	P	S	M	B	J	D	J	Y	D	J	S
C	X	I	T	A	T	F	M	L	H	O	Y	W	A	X
W	X	R	K	N	Y	G	X	P	O	F	O	M	E	D
X	M	A	D	V	Y	G	E	A	X	C	O	R	E	H
R	X	C	C	J	V	D	R	L	X	H	K	V	S	A
T	L	L	U	V	E	D	A	E	T	N	E	E	D	M
T	K	E	S	H	E	H	I	R	C	I	N	S	D	S
O	X	S	C	W	B	A	S	S	L	O	C	Y	N	T
G	R	U	O	L	K	N	Z	E	C	L	R	G	D	N
E	O	H	D	Q	Z	D	B	H	J	I	I	D	E	P
T	S	I	U	J	J	S	A	S	R	S	P	F	E	Z
H	N	T	F	E	K	D	P	I	A	M	I	L	B	D
E	T	W	U	S	N	K	D	D	U	L	G	E	E	E
R	S	R	N	U	K	P	S	E	S	L	V	H	N	S
R	P	T	V	S	V	D	O	U	B	T	I	N	G	B

**S**  
**E**  
**A**  
**R**  
**C**  
**H**

JESUS	TOGETHER	DOUBTING	RECORDED
MIRACLES	SIGNS	SHOWED	BELIEVED
DOORS	LIFE	HANDS	DISCIPLES
TOUCHED	THOMAS	SIDE	LOCKED

Colour the picture



## Believe It or Not!

Read each clue and write the correct letter.

1. Free from conflict; opposite of war
2. Feeling happy and joyful
3. Not sure something is true
4. Entrance to a room
5. Believe without proof
6. Not open
7. A metal piece hit with a hammer
8. The disciple who needed to see to believe
9. To break God's law
10. Body parts at the end of your arms

A. THOMAS B. PEACE C. DOUBT D. HANDS E. SIN  
F. CLOSED G. HAPPY H. FAITH I. NAIL J. DOOR



# YOUTH



## Step by step to Calvary

A parish walks the Passion together

Bernard Anthony

**KUALA LUMPUR:** After a hiatus of twelve years, the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health, Kampung Pandan, brought to life a powerful re-enactment of the Passion of Jesus Christ, themed “Journey to Calvary – Come, Let’s Walk with Passion.”

Commonly known as a Passion Play, the presentation vividly portrayed the final moments of Christ’s earthly life — from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the Last Supper, His betrayal, trial, suffering, crucifixion, and burial.

Held on March 28, after the Friday Mass and Way of the Cross, the re-enactment unfolded within the chapel and its surrounding grounds, drawing an estimated 250 parishioners into this deeply moving

Lenten experience.

Directed by Ivan Perry, who also serves as the BEC Zone leader, the initiative brought together 38 participants — predominantly youths from the chapel, with a few from the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jalan Peel. Their involvement was not merely functional, but deeply intentional. Over the course of a month, these young people dedicated themselves to rehearsals, formation, and preparation, growing not only in performance but also in faith and understanding of Christ’s Passion.

For many of the youths, the experience became a journey of personal encounter. Stepping into the roles of biblical figures, they were invited to reflect more deeply on the meaning of sacrifice, betrayal, and unconditional love. Their sincerity, energy, and commitment were evident in every scene, drawing the congregation into a more authentic and heartfelt experience.

The Passion Play became a prayerful journey where parishioners were not mere

spectators, but active participants — invited to step back in time and walk alongside Christ on His path to Calvary. It was not simply a remembrance, but a reliving of His Passion — an encounter with His suffering, sacrifice, and saving love.

Two particularly poignant moments drew the faithful deeper into the experience. During the Last Supper scene, parishioners were given bread to partake in, symbolising their communion with Christ. Later, as Jesus carried His Cross, the congregation followed with lighted candles, forming a solemn procession around the chapel grounds towards Calvary.

The atmosphere throughout was one of reverent silence and reflection. Many listened attentively to the narration at each scene, entering into a space of contemplation that allowed for a more intimate encounter with Christ and a deeper appreciation of His sacrifice.

Participants donned period costumes, adding authenticity to each scene, while

even some parishioners embraced the spirit of the occasion by wearing shawls and tunics. Every detail — from props to staging — was thoughtfully prepared, with all costs generously borne by the community, including a fellowship dinner that followed.

The re-enactment concluded at the tomb of Jesus with a moving invitation from the narrator: to reflect, to surrender one’s burdens, and to encounter Christ in the quiet of the heart. As the faithful stood at the foot of the Cross, they were reminded that this journey does not end in sorrow — for Easter joy awaits.

Echoing the words of Mother Mary, “Do whatever He tells you,” the Passion Play transcended theatre, becoming a deeply contemplative and transformative experience. It stirred repentance, deepened faith, and left many — especially the youths who brought the story to life — with hearts renewed, filled with compassion, and a deeper awareness of God’s saving love.

## A day of joy, a lesson in love

**PENANG:** Visiting St Joseph’s Home recently was a deeply meaningful experience for the catechism ministry of Risen Christ Church. The visit was carried out with the support and encouragement of parish priest Friar Crispus Mosinoh, OFM, whose guidance continues to

inspire the catechism community in its mission of service and encounter.

For many catechism students, this was their first opportunity to meet and interact with the children of St Joseph’s Home. What began with curiosity and hesitation soon gave way to warmth and openness. As the activities unfolded, smiles emerged, conversations flowed, and the space was filled with laughter and joy. It was heartening to witness how quickly the children set aside their shyness, forming simple yet sincere bonds of friendship.

One catechist, Anastasia, shared that she

had expected to simply observe, but left carrying something far deeper. She found joy in organising the games and watching the children play freely, their laughter filling the space in a way that felt both pure and grounding. In those simple moments, she was reminded of the quiet power of presence, how being there, fully and sincerely, can itself be a gift. What stayed with her was not just what she saw, but what she felt: a gentle yet profound reminder that, in the end, it is love, dignity, and human connection that truly remain.

Seeing the children play and laugh together became a gentle reminder to rediscover simplicity, humility, and the quiet joy found in genuine connection. A simple sharing of snacks further deepened this encounter, as conversations flowed more freely and friendships be-



gan to blossom.

Though brief, the visit left a lasting impression. As hugs were exchanged and goodbyes waved, it was clear that something beautiful had taken place, a sharing of joy, kindness, and love that will not soon be forgotten. **Ezekiel Vincent**



# SEEKING THE WORD THROUGH SCRIPTURE TREASURE HUNT

Gideon Joseph

AYER ITAM, Penang: With hearts united in prayer, more than 50 catechism students of Risen Christ Church gathered for a Bible Scripture Treasure Hunt, blending faith formation with joyful fellowship.

The morning began at 9.30am with a light breakfast, followed by an opening prayer led by parish priest, Friar Crispus Mosinoh, OFM. Entrusting the day's activities to the Lord, he reminded students that in seeking the Scriptures, they were ultimately seeking Christ Himself. With a symbolic flag-off, he officially sent the teams on their way, encouraging them to listen attentively to God's voice in His Word.

Organised by the parish catechism ministry, the initiative aimed to show young Catholics that the Bible is not merely a religious text, but the living Word through which God continues to speak. The church compound became a dynamic field of discovery, where faith formation met youthful enthusiasm.

Divided into teams, students solved Scripture-based clues that led them to different locations within the church grounds. Each challenge required them to search the Bible, reflect on passages, and answer questions rooted in Catholic teaching, fostering teamwork, attentiveness, and familiarity with both the Old and New Testaments.



Rather than memorisation alone, the treasure hunt invited active engagement with Scripture. At various stations, students identified biblical figures, connected prophetic passages to their fulfilment in Christ, and reflected on moral lessons embedded in the verses — gently guiding them to see the unity of salvation history, from Genesis to the Gospels.

Catechism teachers explained that the event was inspired by the Church's call to nurture a deeper love for Scripture among the young

faithful. "We want our children to see that the Bible is alive," one catechist remarked. "When they search for the verses themselves, read, and understand the context, they begin to encounter Christ personally."

Excitement and friendly competition were balanced by moments of reflection. At the conclusion, students gathered in the church hall for a short prayer, offering thanksgiving for the gift of God's Word. Parents expressed gratitude for the creative approach, noting that it strengthened biblical literacy while fostering fraternity among the parish's young members. In a world full of distractions, the Scripture Treasure Hunt served as a reminder that the Word of God remains "a lamp for our feet and a light for our path" (Psalm 119:105).

The event reflects Risen Christ Church's broader mission to form disciples who know, love, and live their faith. By engaging both mind and heart, the catechism ministry continues to sow seeds that, God willing, will bear fruit in the years to come.

As students departed with hearts full and bellies even fuller, their smiles and animated conversations spoke volumes. Through teamwork, reflection, and prayer, they discovered that seeking the Word of God is not a task to endure but a journey to embrace. In searching the Scriptures, they encountered not only clues — but Christ Himself, the true and eternal Treasure.



## Theology of the Body

As an attendee of the Theology of the Body programme, I initially expected



nothing more than another church-related lesson; however, I found myself engaging in discussions that helped shape my understanding of true love, relationships, and human sexuality. I was deeply intrigued, and even pleasantly surprised by how we slowly evolved into speaking openly about a topic that was typically considered to be uncomfortable and often unspoken. Through the informative talks and the willingness of the experts to help, I matured in a way I never thought I could. Truly understanding how God calls us to love transformed my doubtful thinking



into a triumphant understanding of newfound clarity and brought me closer to him. **Le-Anne Loy**

Sitting quietly during Eucharistic Adoration, I felt a peace I didn't expect. It made me realise how much I wanted to understand my faith more. This was part of a two-day programme on the *Theology of the Body*, a book by Pope John Paul II that teaches about love, relationships and human dignity.

The programme was attended by students from different catechism classes and led by Sr Retta Savarianan FdCC and a few speakers. Through talks, group activities and discussions, we explored God's purpose in creating us — to love. We learned that human beings are not objects but persons made with dignity, and that love is different from lust. True love should be Free, Total, Faithful and Fruitful (FTFF).

We also learnt about the sacrament of marriage, which is the outward sign of inward grace. Marriage is a holy union where husband and wife help each other and their family grow closer to God. Other topics included vocation, dating, purity and relationships. We discussed how sex has a unitive purpose, bringing two people together, and a procreative purpose, open to life. Group activities helped us reflect on how these teachings can guide our daily choices and relationships.

Personally, as someone who doesn't take faith super seriously all the time, this programme really made me think. Even after a week, I keep reflecting on FTFF love and how I can apply it in my life. It was inspiring and helped me grow in faith as I prepare for Confirmation.

**Joshua**



## MONTFORT INVITES YOUTH FOR 2026 SKILLS TRAINING

SHAH ALAM: Montfort Boys Town, a leading institution dedicated to transforming the lives of young people in need for over six decades, has officially opened registration for its 2026 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programme. Admissions will be held on July 23 and 24, 2026 at Montfort, Shah Alam.

The institution has a long-standing mission to empower youth through holistic education, character formation, and hands-on technical training, providing students with the skills and values necessary for meaningful employment and responsible adulthood.

Montfort Boys Town offers a two-year TVET programme leading to Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM) and Montfort Certification. The curriculum combines professional training with moral and character development, ensuring students graduate work-ready and confident. "We believe every young person deserves hope, dignity, and a brighter future," said a spokesperson for the institution.

The 2026 programme offers courses in Electrical, Hospitality, Automotive, and Bakery & Pastry (all leading to SKM certification), as well as Facilities Maintenance and Graphic Design & Multimedia (leading to Montfort Certification).

Each course integrates practical training with personal development to equip students with skills relevant to today's workforce.



Applications are welcome from youth across Malaysia, with priority given to:

- Orphans, youth from poor or dysfunctional families, and minority ethnic groups;
- AOHD or St Vincent de Paul aid recipients;
- Youth from Sabah and Sarawak residing in Semenanjung Malaysia with their families.

Application forms are available for down-

load at [www.montfort.org.my](http://www.montfort.org.my)

For assistance, the Pastoral Care Unit can be contacted at 03-5519 1735 / 1736, 019-966 8664, or [pcu@montfort.org.my](mailto:pcu@montfort.org.my)

Montfort Boys Town continues to uphold the vision of St Louis Marie de Montfort: "Those whom the world rejects must move you the most." The programme offers deserving youth an opportunity to build a life of dignity, purpose, and hope.



# 150 years: Servant of God Cardinal Celso Costantini

The year 2026 carries special significance and new beginnings for many. For the Order of the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord (*Congregatio Discipulorum Domini*, CDD), it holds a particularly cherished place, marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Celso Costantini, on April 3, 1876.

Born Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini in the Castion-Zoppola region of northern Italy, within the Diocese of Concordia-Pordenone, he enrolled for the priesthood at the age of 16 and was ordained seven years later, in 1899. After World War I, driven by “grand faith and trusting love in God,” Fr Costantini founded the Istituto San Filippo Neri, a home called *Figli della Guerra* (“Children of War”) for abandoned children. Of these children, he said, “These babies, although they don’t have the right to be born, have the right to live.”

Believing that the arts could express God’s truth and beauty, he founded the Society of Friends of Christian Art in 1911, and later established a journal on Catholic art, which continues to be published to this day.

In 1921, he was ordained bishop, and in 1922, Pope Pius XI appointed him as the first Apostolic Delegate to China, in the spirit of *Maximum Illud*, the apostolic letter issued by Pope Benedict XV that defined the principles and priorities of Catholic missions. Upon his arrival in 1922, he was elevated to Archbishop, becoming the highest-ranking prelate in China.

In 1924, on behalf of the Holy Father, he convoked the first Chinese Council to reestablish the missionary structure in China. Among his early initiatives, he identified six indigenous Chinese candidates for ordination; in 1926, these men became the first six Chinese bishops in modern history, consecrated in Rome. Interestingly, it is said that Costantini and these bishops stayed for a night at College General, Penang, en route to

Rome.

Following his request, in 1927, he received permission from Rome to establish a Congregation. This came to fruition in 1928 with the formation of the first clerical religious institute in China under the banner The Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord.

Costantini is best known for his decade of service in China, dedicating himself to strengthening missionary work and fostering the belief that evangelisation in China should be led by the Chinese people themselves. His tenure there saw remarkable successes.

Returning to Italy in 1933, he began his Curial service with the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, eventually becoming second in command. He was elevated to Cardinal Priest by Pope Pius XII in 1953 and, in 1954, was appointed Chancellor of the Holy See. He also served in key departments, including the Congregation for Rites and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, and as Honorary President of the Pontifical Commission of Sacred Arts.

Cardinal Celso Costantini returned to the Lord on October 17, 1958. On June 14, 2016, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints declared him a Servant of God, and the canonical process for his beatification and canonisation was opened on Oct 17, 2017 at the Cathedral of Concordia Sagittaria in the Diocese of Concordia-Pordenone — an extraordinary event for the diocese.

On this 150th anniversary of his birth, we pray to Servant of God Cardinal Celso Costantini for intercession, that more missionaries may serve the Lord with the humility and dedication he exemplified. His legacy and mission continue to thrive.

The Superior General of the CDD is currently Rev Fr John Chia Khee Long, and the Order counts 63 members. In 2027, the CDD will celebrate 100 years since its founding. **Fr Simon Ee, CDD**

## MEMORIAM

For enquiries, please contact:  
Email: [memoriam@herald.com.my](mailto:memoriam@herald.com.my)  
Tel: 03-2026 8291

### 30th Anniversary



**Bernard James Pereira**  
4.9.1923 – 16.4.1996

\* *“For they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” Lk 20:36*

Dearly loved & treasured by Wife, Florence Loone & children. \*

### In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Parents



**A Alphonse**  
Born: 2/8/1929  
Died: 22/4/2007



**Rita Alphonse**  
Born: 10/4/1929  
Died: 6/5/2021

Your prayers, kisses, hugs and comfort gave us a lifetime of love. Now as we go on, you will watch over us and our families.

From your sons,  
Francis & family, John & family and Loved ones.

### 15th Anniversary



**In Ever Loving Memory of Louis Danasamy**  
13th February 1935 - 1st April 2011

*Sadly missed along life’s way, quietly remembered every day. No longer in our life to share, but in our hearts, you’re always there. We love you, we miss you and wish you are here with us*  
Your loving wife Rose, daughters, sons-in-law & grandchildren.

### In Loving Memory of 19th Anniversary 9th Anniversary



**Mr. A Savarinathan**  
25/10/1921 to 14/04/2007



**Mrs. Anamah Savarinathan**  
29/09/1938 to 12/04/2017

Today we are not only remembering our beloved parents, but we are also celebrating the myriad of ways they enriched our lives. As we share our memories, let us find comfort in knowing that their spirit will live on through the love they shared and the lives they touched.

May we carry forward their legacy by embodying the same compassion and generosity they so effortlessly displayed.

The 19th and 9th Anniversary Memorial Service for our beloved parents will be celebrated at Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Jalan Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur, on 12th April at 8.00 am, and 14th April at 6.30am.

Prayers will also be held at our residence No. 22, Jalan 9, Ampang Jaya, Selangor, on both days at 8.00pm.

Your prayers and presence will be much appreciated.

From: Loving Children, Daughters-in-law, Grandchildren, Relatives and Friends.

## NOTICE

**The cost for placing a memoriam is RM150 per column.**

For enquiries, please contact us:

Tel/WhatsApp: 03-2026 8291

Email: [memoriam@herald.com.my](mailto:memoriam@herald.com.my)

## BE FORMED AND INFORMED

SUBSCRIBE TO



We provide news, commentaries and teachings on the Catholic Church. Get the physical copy of *HERALD* delivered to your doorstep. You can also subscribe for your loved ones.

Subscription Rates:

COUNTRY	YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION
Malaysia	RM220
Singapore	RM1,400

For enquiries, please contact:

**HERALD The Catholic Weekly**

5, Jalan Robertson, 50150 Kuala Lumpur

Tel/WhatsApp: 03-2026 8291 | E-mail: [advertisement@herald.com.my](mailto:advertisement@herald.com.my)

Website: [www.heraldmalaysia.com](http://www.heraldmalaysia.com)

# From service to Resurrection

VATICAN: In a series of deeply reflective homilies during the Sacred Triduum, Pope Leo XIV invited the faithful to journey with Christ through love, sacrifice, and renewed hope, emphasising that the Paschal Mystery is not only to be remembered, but lived.

On Holy Thursday, the Pope reflected on the humility and intimacy of Christ's love, seen most powerfully in the washing of the disciples' feet. He reminded the faithful that true greatness lies in service, calling priests and all believers to a love that is self-giving, patient, and faithful even in moments of weakness and betrayal. The Eucharist, he said, is both gift and mission — a call to become what we receive.

On Good Friday, the Holy Father

turned to the silence and suffering of the Cross, urging Christians to confront the reality of sin, injustice, and human brokenness. He spoke of Christ's total surrender to the Father, a love that holds nothing back even in the face of rejection, pain, and death. The Cross, he said, reveals both the depth of human sin and the greater depth of God's mercy.

"Where there is suffering, God is not absent," he reflected, inviting the faithful to recognise Christ in the wounded, the oppressed, and the forgotten. He cautioned against indifference, urging the Church to stand in solidarity with all who suffer.

At the Easter Vigil, the tone shifted from sorrow to radiant hope. Proclaiming the Resurrection as the definitive vic-

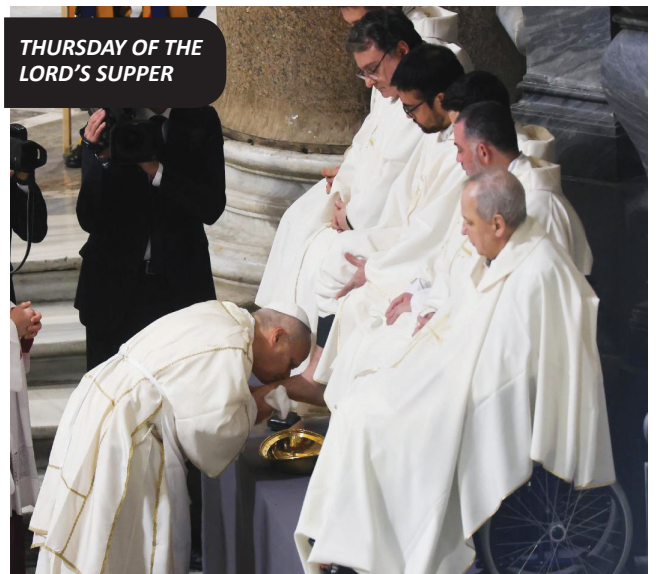
tory of life over death, the Pope reminded the faithful that darkness never has the final word. "The tomb is empty," he said, "and therefore no life is without hope."

He described Easter as a "new beginning," where every fear, failure, and sin can be transformed by the grace of the Risen Christ. Just as the women at the tomb moved from fear to proclamation, so too are Christians called to become witnesses of hope in a troubled world.

Across the three liturgies, Pope Leo XIV's message was clear: the journey from the Upper Room to Calvary and finally to the empty tomb is the pattern of Christian life — a call to love without counting the cost, to trust in the midst of suffering, and to live as people of the Resurrection. **Agencies**



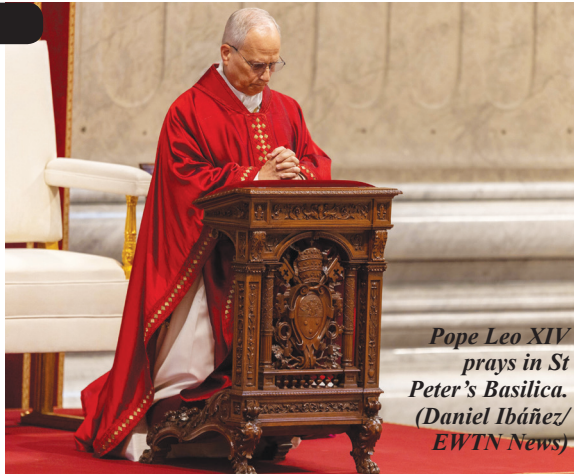
**CHRISM MASS**  
Pope Leo XIV breathes on chrisom oil at St Peter's Basilica, Vatican April 2, 2026. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



**THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**  
Pope Leo XIV washes the feet of clergymen at the Basilica of St John Lateran in Rome. (OSV News photo/Vincenzo Livieri, Reuters)



**FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**  
Pope Leo XIV carries the cross during the Via Crucis at the Colosseum in Rome. (Daniel Ibañez/EWTN News)



Pope Leo XIV prays in St Peter's Basilica. (Daniel Ibañez/EWTN News)



**EASTER VIGIL**  
Pope Leo XIV lights the candle from a Paschal Candle in St Peter's Basilica. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)



Pope Leo XIV baptises an Elect. (Vatican Media)

## 2026 TOURS

**15D MEDJUGORJE & E.EUROPE PILGRIMAGE**

RM 15,900 PIP

SARAJEVO - MOSTAR - MEDJUGORJE - DUBROVNIK - SIBENIK - ZADAR - ZAGREB - BUDAPEST - WIELICZKA - KRAKOW - OSWIECIM - CZESTOCHOWA - WADOWICE - PRAGUE

<b>01 MAY</b>	<b>16 OCT</b>
Msgr Jude Miranda	Fr Christopher J. Lim

**14D MARIAN SHRINES PILGRIMAGE**

<b>03 MAY</b>	<b>20 SEP</b>	ROME - LOURDES - LOYOLA - LIMPIAS - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - PORTO - FATIMA - SANTAREM - LISBON
Fr Alex Chelvam	TBA	
<b>11 OCT</b>		PARIS - MAGNY COURS - NEVER - LA ROQUE GAGEAC - ROCAMADOUR - LOURDES - LOYOLA - LIMPIAS - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - PORTO - FATIMA - SANTAREM - LISBON
Fr Albet Arockiasamy		
<b>27 SEP</b>		Fr George Packiasamy

RM 15,900 PIP

**11D MEXICO - OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE**

RM 18,500 PIP

MEXICO CITY - GUADALUPE - TLAXCALA - OCOTLAN - PUEBLA - TULPETLAC - BARCELONA

<b>19 NOV</b>
Fr V A Michael

**10D ITALY - FRANCISCAN SITES & WONDERS TOUR**

RM 11,500 PIP

ROME - MANOPPELLO - SAN GIOVANNI - LANCIANO - LORETO - ASSISI - FLORENCE - PISA - PADOVA - VENICE

<b>09 NOV</b>
---------------

EX KLIA

(237364 - TIKKPK8377)  
*Attainable yet Priceless*

For more info:  
+6 019 - 6688 471 (Adeline)  
+6 019 - 6688 461 (Jess)  
[www.topaztravels.com](http://www.topaztravels.com)