

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.



Prayer for the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026)

Lord God,
You call us to walk together
as Your People,
drawn into the life of communion
of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Guide us as we prepare for
the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026.
Teach us to listen deeply,
to discern faithfully,
and to trust where You are leading us.
We place before You the four areas we
are discerning together.

Bless our families,
that they may be places of love,
faith, forgiveness, and hope.

Renew our Church,
that we may grow in communion,
participation, and joyful witness
to the Gospel.

Open our hearts to the cry of creation,
that we may care for the earth
with reverence, responsibility,
and gratitude.

Guide our life in society,
that we may seek justice, promote
peace, and stand in solidarity with the
poor and the vulnerable.

As pastoral pathways emerge
from our discernment,
may they enrich and strengthen
our local faith communities.

With Mary, Mother of the Church,
who pondered Your Word and walked
in faith, teach us to walk together
in hope.

Keep us rooted in Christ,
attentive to one another,
and open to the work of
Your Holy Spirit.

May this Convention help us live more
faithfully as one Catholic Church of
Malaysia, serving in this land we love.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



VATICAN: Pope Leo XIV has called on Catholics worldwide to rediscover the dignity, vocation and spiritual richness of old age, reminding grandparents and the elderly that they are never forgotten by God and urging younger generations to accompany them with love, presence and care.

In his message for the Sixth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, celebrated on July 26, the Feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, the Holy Father reflected on the theme, *I will never forget you* (Isaiah 49:15).

Drawing on the words of the prophet Isaiah, Pope Leo said God's promise, "I will never forget you," is one that every person can hear addressed personally to them. Even when people feel abandoned or overlooked, God remains faithful, holding each person close in His love.

The Pope acknowledged that many elderly people experience loneliness, neglect and the painful feeling of being forgotten. Too often, he said, they slip into anonymity, whether living alone or in care facilities where their identity risks being reduced to a

bed number or medical condition.

Against this reality, Pope Leo said, God's unfailing love offers hope while challenging the Church and society to restore the dignity of every elderly person. The Church, he stressed, must ensure that no elderly person feels invisible or abandoned.

He described the annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly as an opportunity for the Church to renew its mission of caring for all God's children, especially those advancing in years.

The Pope encouraged young people to revive the beautiful tradition of visiting their grandparents, elderly relatives and neighbours, particularly those who have no one to visit them. Rather than allowing his message to remain merely words, he urged Catholics to transform it into "tender and affectionate encounters" that communicate closeness and genuine human presence.

Quoting from his encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo observed that, while digital culture has multiplied opportunities for communication, the human heart still longs for authentic relationships marked by attentive listening, kind words and compassionate touch.

He also highlighted the growing challenges facing older people, noting that economic pressures, migration and war

often separate families, leaving many elderly people to face old age alone. Yet, he insisted, every older person remains deeply loved by God and remains an integral part of the Church.

The Holy Father reminded older Catholics that they never cease to be sons and daughters of God. He encouraged those who may never have experienced a deep relationship with the Lord to see old age not as the end of the journey, but as a privileged time to begin — or begin again — a life of faith.

"Do not be afraid of fragility," Pope Leo urged, explaining that the weaknesses accompanying old age can become a source of wisdom, reconciliation and hope. In a world wounded by war and social unrest, he said, older people have a unique vocation to become witnesses of peace through their prayers, faith and quiet trust in God.

Concluding his message, Pope Leo thanked grandparents and the elderly for faithfully supporting him through their prayers, especially the Rosary. Entrusting them to the Lord who "never forgets us," he prayed that they may be continually renewed in faith, hope and love.

To read the full message, go to: <https://11nq.com/ilc9uaq>

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Never forgotten, never alone

Growing old is not the greatest fear. Growing old and feeling forgotten is.

Not forgotten because of failing memory, but forgotten because no one has time to visit. No one calls. No one listens. No one notices. For many elderly people, loneliness becomes a silent companion long before death arrives.

Pope Leo XIV could not have chosen a more fitting theme for this year's World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly: *I will never forget you* (Is 49:15). Through these words of the prophet Isaiah, God assures every elderly person that they remain engraved on the palms of His hands. Even when society overlooks them, God never does.

Yet the Holy Father reminds us that these words are meant to become a way of life. They challenge families, parishes and communities to ensure that no elderly person feels abandoned or invisible. He urges young people to revive the beautiful tradition of visiting not only their own grandparents but also elderly persons who have no one to visit them.

Malaysia is not immune to this growing reality.

Our population is ageing rapidly. Longer life expectancy is a blessing, but it also presents new challenges. Many adult children genuinely want to care for their ageing parents but struggle under the pressures of modern life. Both husband and wife work. Children are in school. Families are often separated by careers that take them elsewhere. Illness, financial pressures and changing family structures have made caregiving increasingly difficult. As a result, many elderly parents spend long hours alone or eventually move into homes

for the elderly — not necessarily because they are unloved, but because their families simply cannot cope.

Across the country, homes run by religious congregations, charitable organisations and private operators have become home to growing numbers of senior citizens. While some residents receive regular visits, others wait weeks or even months for a familiar face to appear. Their stories remind us that loneliness is becoming one of the greatest challenges facing our elderly.

Some experience neglect, abandonment or emotional isolation. The Women, Family and Community Development Ministry is currently drafting legislation that could compel adult children to support their ageing parents. While discussions on legal responsibilities continue, no law can legislate love, gratitude or compassion. Those virtues must first be nurtured within the family.

Pope Francis, who established this World Day in 2021, described the elderly as guardians of memory, witnesses of faith and bridges between generations. A society that discards its elderly, he warned, eventually loses its own soul.

For the Church in Malaysia, this day should be far more than an annual celebration. It should prompt every parish to ask: Do we know who our homebound elderly are? Who visits those living in homes for the elderly? Which widows or widowers spend weeks without receiving a visitor?

Our Basic Ecclesial Communities are uniquely placed to ensure that no elderly parishioner

slips through the cracks. They know their neighbourhoods, they know who is homebound, and they can become the first sign that the Church remembers. Pope Leo has also called on dioceses and parishes to establish permanent pastoral care for the elderly, ensuring that accompaniment becomes part of the ordinary life of every parish.

Every Catholic has a role to play. Children can spend time with their grandparents. Young adults can visit homes for the elderly. Parish ministries can accompany those who are homebound. Sometimes the greatest gift we can offer is not financial support but our presence — a conversation over a cup of tea, a ride to Mass, help with a hospital appointment or simply a weekly phone call. These simple acts proclaim the Gospel more eloquently than many words.

Nor should we overlook the gifts the elderly continue to offer the Church. Many quietly sustain families and parishes through their prayers, wisdom and lived faith. Retirement from work does not mean retirement from mission.

One day, if God grants us long life, we too will grow old. The Church we build today will become the Church that receives us tomorrow. May it be a Church where no grandparent, no elderly person, and no one living alone ever has reason to wonder if they have been forgotten.

Only then will Isaiah's promise — "I will never forget you" — become not only God's promise to us, but also our promise to one another.

Patricia Pereira

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Aloysius Tan

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: 1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12;

Romans 8: 28-30;

Gospel: Matthew 13: 44-52

Living wisely

The question for each of us is simple: Where is my treasure?

The answer is revealed not by our words but by how we spend our time, energy, attention and love.

If Christ is truly our treasure, we will seek His wisdom before making decisions.

Parents will pray before reacting to their children. Young people will ask not only, "What do I want?" but "What does God want?" Business people will ask not only, "Is this profitable?" but "Is this right?" Families will ask not only, "What can we achieve?" but "How can we grow closer to God?"

We will also make time to listen to those whose lives have been shaped by decades of faithful discipleship.

Wisdom grows through prayer, Scripture, listening and walking with Christ each day.

Solomon asked for wisdom. The man in the Gospel recognised the hidden treasure. The merchant recognised the priceless pearl. Our grandparents remind us that life's greatest treasures are not possessions but the wisdom that comes from walking faithfully with God.

May we ask God for the same gift Solomon desired — wisdom to recognise Christ as our greatest treasure, wisdom to discern God's will in every decision, and wisdom to treasure the elderly among us, whose lives witness that a life rooted in God is worth more than anything the world can offer.

May our families become places where this Chinese proverb is no longer merely an ancient saying but a living reality because, through our grandparents we encounter the wisdom, faithfulness and enduring love of God.

Wisdom to recognise the true treasure

There is a beautiful Chinese proverb: "When there is an elderly person in the family, there is a treasure in the home."

This ancient saying reminds us that older people are not a burden but a blessing. Their presence is a treasure because they possess something that cannot be bought: wisdom.

Perhaps this truth inspired Pope Francis when he established the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in 2021. This year, Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme: "I will never forget you" (Isaiah 49:15). It is both God's promise to those who feel forgotten in old age and a call for every Christian community to remember, honour and care for our elderly.

Today's readings beautifully connect this celebration with the gift of wisdom.

Solomon knew what truly mattered

In the first reading, God appears to Solomon and says: "Ask what you would like Me to give you."

Imagine if God asked each of us that question today.

Many would ask for good health, financial security, success for our children, a better career, or freedom from problems.

But Solomon asked for none of these.

He asked for wisdom — an understanding heart to know God's will and govern God's people well.

Why?

Because Solomon understood what many never discover: wisdom enables us to use every other blessing well.

Without wisdom, wealth can destroy us. Without wisdom, power corrupts us. Without wisdom, even good intentions can lead us astray.

Wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective. It is knowing not only what is right, but what God desires.

Recognising the true treasure

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells two brief parables. A man discovers a treasure hidden in a field. A merchant finds a pearl of great price.

Both immediately sell everything to obtain what they have found.

Why?

Because they recognised its true value.

Many people may have walked across that field. Many merchants may have seen countless pearls. Only these two recognised the treasure.

That is wisdom.

The Kingdom of God is not hidden because God wants to keep it secret, but because many fail to recognise its value.

Our world is filled with treasures competing for our attention — career, money, technology, comfort and success. None of these is evil.

But when they become our greatest treasure, we gradually lose sight of God's Kingdom.

Perhaps this explains why so many people live with anxiety despite having more than previous generations. Families break apart not because they lack possessions but because they lack wisdom.

Young people have unlimited information but often little direction. We are connected online, yet increasingly disconnected from one another.

The world does not simply suffer from a lack of knowledge. It suffers from a lack of wisdom.

This brings us back to today's celebration.

Why does the Church honour grandparents?

Not simply because they are old, but because they have walked with God through every season of life. They have known joy and sorrow, success and failure, health and sickness, peace and struggle.

Their wisdom has been shaped by prayer, sacrifice, forgiveness, perseverance, life experience and faith.

Of course, age alone does not produce wisdom. Wisdom comes from allowing God to shape our lives through every experience.

When grandparents pass on the faith, tell stories of God's faithfulness, teach us to pray, remind us to forgive, and encourage us to trust God in difficult times, they hand on treasures far greater than money or property.

Sadly, modern society often values speed over patience, productivity over presence, and youth over experience. Many elderly people suffer loneliness because few have time to listen.

Yet today's Gospel reminds us that we may be walking past treasures without recognising them.

Perhaps the treasure is sitting quietly in our own home.

ACLAC renews leadership for mission

KUALA LUMPUR: The Archdiocesan Chinese Language Apostolate Committee (ACLAC) of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur held its 2026 Annual General Meeting and election of its 16th Executive Committee on July 4 at the Church of the Holy Rosary.

The gathering brought together 42 representatives from parish Chinese Language Apostolates across the archdiocese and 14 representatives from various sub-ministries. The day began with fellowship over breakfast before participants gathered for a forum themed, *Journey Together with Commitment – Participation and Leadership of Chinese Language Leaders*.

The forum was attended by ACLAC ecclesiastical assistant Fr Augustine Lee, advisor Fr Chin Sin Wee, OCD, and lay leader Joseph Lim, who shared reflections on leadership, service and evangelisation.

Drawing from his own experience, Joseph distinguished between parish ministry and community service, encouraging participants to cultivate their spiritual lives through retreats and prayer. He noted that moments of silence enable believers to draw closer to Christ and become more attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Reflecting on his own vocation, Fr Augustine spoke about finding a sense of belonging within the Church and



encouraged participants to embrace leadership with courage and generosity. He reminded them that responsibility is shared by the entire Christian community, not only by committee members, and urged them to entrust every challenge to God through prayer. Referring to the upcoming Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC2026), he said the Church in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak is called to walk together in a spirit of communion rather than work in isolation.

Fr Chin highlighted the indispensable role of the laity in the Church's mission of evangelisation. He encouraged participants to recognise the unique gifts God has entrusted to each person and to place

those gifts at the service of the Church. He described ACLAC as a platform that provides formation, resources and pastoral support to the Chinese-speaking Catholic community.

Following the forum, participants gathered in small groups for Conversation in the Spirit, reflecting prayerfully on the challenges faced by parish leaders, ministry coordinators and volunteers. The afternoon session featured annual reports from the various sub-ministries and parish representatives, providing an opportunity to share pastoral experiences, celebrate the fruits of evangelisation and learn from one another.

The meeting then proceeded with the elec-

tion of the 16th Executive Committee after Fr Augustine formally dissolved the outgoing committee. The election was conducted by a team led by Leonard Sim Yong Chian, chairman of *Mustard Seeds Evangelisation*, in the presence of Fr Stephen Ng, CDD, ecclesiastical assistant to *Mustard Seeds*.

Archbishop Julian Leow later joined the assembly to offer encouragement and pastoral guidance. Commending ACLAC for its 33 years of service to the Chinese-speaking Catholic community, he acknowledged its significant contribution to faith formation and pastoral accompaniment throughout the archdiocese.

Looking ahead to the Jubilee of the Redemption in 2033, the archbishop challenged the newly elected committee to move beyond maintaining existing ministries and, instead, ask how many more people could encounter Christ through their efforts by 2030 and 2033. He urged members to become missionary disciples who actively bring the Gospel to others.

The newly elected Executive Committee for the 2026–2029 term is led by chairman Michael Sew, assisted by vice chairman Christopher Tan, secretary Adelina Wong, vice secretary Regina Bon and treasurer Victor Chew. Eric Liow and Lucie Cheong were elected auditors, while Eric Tan and Joan Chong serve as committee members.


**KUALA LUMPUR
ARCHDIOCESE**

**Diary of Archbishop
Julian Leow**

July

28-30 Meeting – CFM Exco, Kuching
31 Mass – Feast, Church of St Ignatius, Petaling Jaya


PENANG DIOCESE

**Diary of Cardinal
Sebastian Francis**

July - August

28/7- Visit of parish priest and parishioners of the Titular Church in Rome, Santa Maria Causa Nostrae Laetitiae to Penang


**MALACCA JOHORE
DIOCESE**

**Diary of Bishop
Bernard Paul**

July - August

28/7 Meeting via Zoom – Caritas Malaysia Diocesan Directors & Ecclesiastical Assistants (CM DEA)
1/8 Confirmation – Church of Divine Mercy, Skudai
1/8 Confirmation – Church of Christ the King, Kulai
8/8 Assembly – Chinese Language & Cultural Council (CLCC), Kluang
8/8 Confirmation – Church of St Louis, Kluang





Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #281



Welcome dear friends:

It rained heavily on July 11 morning. The voter turnout was rather encouraging. The results were as expected. “Dough and dole-outs” decide.

It also coincided with the Centenary celebration of the Parish of St Henry, Batu Pahat.

In addition, the Pilgrim Cross graces the Parish of St Theresa Masai from July 11 - August 8.

Local takes! Going Nowhere!

The landslide victory for traditional heavyweights in Johor ended the unity government, wiped out the opposition and third-party alternatives, and some had to re-evaluate themselves.

Malaysia's politics remains ethno-religious, politicising identity and alienating minorities.

While politicians play games, the everyday citizens are beset by anxieties: the bread-and-butter strain, youth facing escalating career constraints, forcing them to delay marriage and changing family planning trends.

The secular, multi-ethnic vision of a Malaysian Malaysia is being systematically downplayed by the administration to prevent a backlash from the Malay heartland.

Reading the Signs: Signs of hope about the Magnifica Humanitas:

It was born from Pope Leo's listening ‘to scientists and engineers who worked with sincere enthusiasm on technologies capable of alleviating immense suffering; to political leaders and public officials who have perseveringly sought just rules; to parents and teachers who are deeply concerned for the future of younger generations’.

About common good: It requires a language of the heart in order to overcome conformism, corruption, and the sense of impossibility generated by the awareness that the property and resources needed to achieve it are in the hands of a few.

About building communion: Place God “on the horizon of our actions and the human person at the centre of our decisions,” by becoming builders of communion, not architects of Babel; servants of the Kingdom that is coming, not masters of towers destined to collapse. (MH16)

About Caritas emergency response: Its volunteers are at the “heart” of the emergency response. An average of 280 organisations, 3360 registered volunteers contribute 2100 volunteer hours daily, take part in relief operations and support affected families.

Thought for the Week:
An Ugly Pear Tree
 There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So, he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away. The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen. The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted. The second son said no it was covered with green buds and full of promise. The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen. The last

son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfilment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life. He told them NEVER TO JUDGE A TREE by only one season.

The lesson from the Father: In the same way, NEVER JUDGE a PERSON in a SINGLE MEETING. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come some time or later.

QnQ? How do we assess a person's strength?

The strongest people are not defined by the struggles they face but by the way they respond to them. They move forward with courage when fear appears, with faith when doubt arises, and with gratitude when life becomes difficult. Their strength lies not in avoiding storms, but in learning how to walk through them with confidence and hope. **Paolo Coelho**

The Spirit @ work: “In the darkness and ignorance of this life, the Holy Spirit enlightens the poor in spirit. He is the love that draws them on, the sweetness that attracts them, the way in which a man approaches God.” **William of Saint Thierry**

Something to tickle you: “Human dignity does not depend on a person's abilities, wealth, or position in life... it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person.” **Magnifica Humanitas**


Bishop Bernard Paul

From head knowledge to heart knowledge

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The *Into the Deep* retreat, organised by the Triumph Heart of Mary (THM) community in Penang, brought together 29 participants from across the northern region to deepen their relationship with the Blessed Trinity. Conducted in Mandarin and inspired by Jesus' invitation, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4), the two-day retreat was held at the Minor Basilica of St Anne.

The retreat focused on helping participants to distinguish between head knowledge and heart knowledge and move beyond intellectual knowledge of God towards a personal encounter with Him. Through guided prayer experiences, they were invited to engage the faculties of the heart — to "feel, taste, hear and see" the presence of God.

Participants were also introduced to the four foundational pillars of the THM formation programme: Prayer, Silence, Penance and Solitude. Retreat master Agnes Lim, a certified THM formator, led in-depth sessions on cultivating an intimate relationship with the Blessed Trinity through prayer. Drawing on the spiritual wisdom of St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Avila and St Ignatius of Loyola, she guided participants in contemplative prayer practices that

foster a deeper interior life.

One participant shared a profound insight gained during the retreat: "When we were asked why we attend Mass and serve in Church ministry, I realised I had never truly examined whether my actions were motivated by love for God. It was only then that I recognised I had not placed God first or loved Him above all things in everything I do. I also came to see that many of the good things I had done were, in some way, still centred on meeting my own needs first."

The testimony captured the retreat's central invitation: to move beyond outward religious practice and intellectual understanding into a deeper, more authentic relationship with the Blessed Trinity, where prayer, ministry and service flow from a genuine love for God.

By the end of the retreat, 14 participants had expressed their desire to continue their spiritual journey by enrolling in THM Module 1 Formation.

Catholics who wish to learn more about the programme are invited to register for the next *Into the Deep Retreat*, which will be conducted in English from Sept 4 to 6, 2026 at Stella Maris Retreat Centre, Penang. Registration is available via <https://forms.gle/KQb-AVCTCabII3MBs> or by WhatsApp at +60 12-428 5033.



Participants engaging their hearts to "feel, taste, hear and see" the presence of God.

From the altar, to the heart, to the people

MELAKA: Fifty-one Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) from the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong, the Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak, and the Church of St Andrew, Muar gathered at the Good Shepherd Seminary from July 5-7 for a three-day retreat themed *The Servant of the Lord*, initiated by Fr Joseph Heng.

The retreat was facilitated by Bro Collin Wee, a De La Salle Brother from Singapore, who conducted sessions in English and Bahasa Malaysia. Fr Joseph and Sr Mary Heng FdCC complemented the programme with Mandarin sessions, ensuring all participants could engage fully. The retreat focused on prayer, the Holy Eucharist, personal reflection, fellowship and spiritual renewal.

Holy Mass, celebrated on separate days by Fr John Yoew and Fr Neville Sinnappah, placed Christ at the heart of the retreat. The prayerful presence of Canossian Sisters Sr Mary and Sr Andrea further enriched the experience, reflecting the unity of clergy, religious and laity journeying

together in service to God's people.

Set in an atmosphere of prayer and silence, the retreat included guided reflections, personal prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, group sharing, outdoor activities and quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament.

Drawing from Scripture and Catholic spirituality, Bro Collin centred his first three sessions on the *Holy Eucharist: The Mystery We Celebrate, The Mystery We Receive, and The Mystery We Become*, before concluding with reflections on the River "Me" and the *Community River*.

Emphasising that the Eucharist is the heart of the Church's sacramental life, Bro Collin reminded participants that their ministry extends beyond the altar.

"From the altar, to the heart, to the people. Every Communion you distribute is also an invitation to become a living sign of Christ's presence."

Echoing Fr Neville's homily, "Become what we receive," participants were challenged to live the Eucharist

A joyful milestone for Penang diocese

Aaron Lim

PENANG: The Diocese of Penang celebrated the ordination of two transitional deacons on July 14 as seminarians Bro Ashley Stephen Chau and Bro Patrick Hilary Sandnasamy took an important step towards the priesthood.

Clergy, religious, family members and faithful gathered at the Church of the Assumption (City Parish) for the joyful celebration, giving thanks for the vocations of the two candidates.

Having completed their seminary formation, the ordination to the transitional diaconate marks the final stage of preparation before priestly ordination.

Bro Patrick is from the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Ipoh, while Sabah-born Bro Ashley spent many years working in Penang and serving the City Parish.

Cardinal Sebastian Francis, who presided at the ordination, began his homily by encouraging both candidates to proclaim the Word of God with courage wherever they are sent.

He reminded them that the ministry of a deacon embraces the proclamation of the Gospel, assisting at the liturgy, serving God's people through pastoral care, and reaching out especially to the vulnerable, the sick and those in need.

The cardinal urged them to model their lives on Christ, "the ultimate servant," who came not to be served but to serve, as they begin their ordained ministry.

The Rite of Ordination included the Litany of Supplication, the Laying on of Hands, the Prayer of Ordination, the Investiture with



Cardinal Sebastian Francis praying over the candidates.



Deacons Ashley Stephen Chau and Patrick Hilary Sandnasamy with their families.

the Stole and Dalmatic, and the Presentation of the Book of the Gospels.

Following the ordination, both newly ordained deacons expressed gratitude to the many people who had accompanied and nurtured their vocation over the years.

Reflecting on the ordination theme, *Do Whatever He Tells You* (Jn 2:5), they reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ faithfully

and carry out His will.

At the conclusion of the celebration, Cardinal Sebastian announced the first pastoral appointments of the newly ordained deacons. Deacon Ashley will serve at the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam, and the Penang Diocesan Youth Network, while Deacon Patrick has been assigned to the City Parish and the Penang Diocesan Ecclesiastical Tribunal.



La Salle Brother Collin Wee speaking to the participants.

workplaces and communities.

The closing sessions invited participants to reflect on where they currently stood in their personal journey — the "River Me" — and how they contribute to the wider "Community River." Though every river is different, Bro Collin reminded them, each flows with purpose under God's guidance.

The retreat concluded with a renewed appreciation that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are called not merely to distribute the Eucharist but to

become living signs of Christ's presence. Alongside moments of prayer and reflection, participants also enjoyed fellowship through interactive games and community-building activities.

Inspired by the retreat's enduring message — "The Eucharist we celebrate must become the Eucharist we live" — the ministers returned to their parishes with renewed commitment to serve Christ faithfully at the altar, among the homebound, in hospitals and in their daily lives. **Martin Gomes**

St Henry parish celebrates a century of faith

Bernard Anthony

BATU PAHAT: The Church of St Henry celebrated its centenary on July 11, giving thanks for 100 years of faith, service and community with a solemn Thanksgiving Mass attended by more than 400 parishioners and pilgrims from across the diocese.

The celebration, marking the parish's centennial (1926–2026), coincided with the feast of St Henry and was held under the theme, *Gather, Together, Togetherness*.

Bishop Bernard Paul was the principal celebrant. He was joined by parish priest, Fr Patrick Tyoh, and concelebrating priests Fr Joseph Heng, Fr John Baptist Yoew and Fr Anthony Heng, CDD.

In his bilingual homily in English and Bahasa, Bishop Bernard reflected on the parish's century-long journey, reminding the congregation that every great work of God begins with humble beginnings.

"Everything starts small," he said. "Like a seed or a young plant, when it is nurtured, watered and cared for, it grows into a strong tree

that bears fruit."

Recalling the parish's history, the bishop noted that the Catholic community in Batu Pahat was established in 1926 by Fr Henry Duvelle. The original church, dedicated to St Henry, King of Germany, later made way for a police station in 1938. A new chapel was subsequently built at another site before the present church was erected in 1964 under the leadership of Fr Francis Kou.

"What was planted a century ago has grown into a vibrant parish community," Bishop Bernard said.

He observed that St Henry parish today reflects the changing face of the Church, serving worshippers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including university students, migrant workers, and faithful from Sabah and Sarawak.

"The Church today is different from the past. This is the new way of being Church," he said. "St Henry must continue to be a welcoming church, with its doors open to everyone regardless of background or status. A welcoming church builds a stronger and more connected

community."

Reflecting on the sacrifices of those who came before, Bishop Bernard noted that between 1926 and 1956, the parish was served by nine non-resident priests before receiving its first resident priest. Since then, 13 resident priests have shepherded the community.

He paid tribute to the pioneering priests, catechists and lay faithful who persevered through hardships to plant and nurture the faith, encourage one another and unite the community in Christ.

Drawing on Scripture, Bishop Bernard reminded parishioners that the Church must always be built on the solid rock of Christ.

"There are those who build on sand and those who build on rock," he said. "True disciples build on Christ. They show no favouritism, practise justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God, as the Prophet Micah teaches."

Using the image of a stalk of paddy, he added, "The more grain it carries, the lower it bows. In the same way, true disciples are marked by humility, love and service."

The bishop stressed that authentic discipleship requires discipline and fidelity to God's will.

"Jesus calls us to follow Him, to love one another as He has loved us, to forgive as He has forgiven us, and to hear and put His Word into practice," he said. "When we build on Christ, the Church will continue to grow and draw others to Him."

Addressing the parish community directly, Bishop Bernard said the seed planted in 1926 had become a flourishing tree that must continue to bear fruit.

"Invite the lost, the weak and those searching for hope," he urged. "There must be no room for exclusiveness or treating the Church like a



Bishop Bernard Paul presenting Pope Leo XIV's apostolic blessing to Church of St Henry's PPC chair, Joseph Ng.

club. This is the House of God, where everyone is welcome. Your forefathers built this parish; now it is your turn to help others know Jesus and make this community a beacon of hope."

He concluded by encouraging the faithful to "walk together, work together and pray together," reminding them that unity reflects the very life of God. "Where there is love, there is God," he said.

A highlight of the celebration was the presentation of Pope Leo XIV's apostolic blessing, beautifully calligraphed on a commemorative parchment, which Bishop Bernard presented to the Parish Pastoral Council chairperson, Joseph Ng, on behalf of the parish.

In his closing remarks, Fr Patrick thanked God for sustaining the Catholic community in Batu Pahat over the past century and expressed gratitude to Bishop Bernard, the concelebrating priests and all who had travelled from near and far for the historic celebration.

Noting that St Henry is the only church in Peninsular Malaysia dedicated to the saint, Fr Patrick said it was a unique blessing for the small town of Batu Pahat. He encouraged the faithful to look ahead with hope to the next century, while calling on the parish to pray earnestly for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and to inspire young people to respond generously to God's call.



Convent Light Street celebrates faith, heritage and homecoming

PENANG: As Penang celebrated the 18th anniversary of George Town's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 7, an iconic landmark briefly opened its doors, uncovering a rich history marked by education and faith.

More than 200 former students, teachers and parishioners gathered at the grounds of the former Convent Light Street (CLS), which holds the distinction of being the oldest girls' school in Malaysia, established in 1852 by the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (IJS).

For many, it was an emotional experience as joyful laughter and heartfelt thanksgiving filled the corridors of the old school as they walked down memory lane.

A thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration was

held at the CLS chapel, with Fr Edmund Woon from City Parish being the main celebrant.

The event coincided with the ongoing *Perjalanan Salib* (Journey of the Cross) with the *Salib* being placed at the altar of the chapel, uniting CLS' past heritage with the spiritual journey of the Malaysian Church in moving towards the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC 2026).

During his homily, Fr Edmund delivered an insightful account of the school's historical roots and its connection with the Church of the Assumption through its former parish priest, the late Bishop Jean-Baptiste Boucho, who had requested for the IJ sisters to take root in Penang.

He also urged the faithful to continue pray-



ing for the success of the upcoming MPC2026 which will be a groundbreaking moment for the Malaysian Church which has since journeyed from the Second Vatican Council to previous Peninsular Malaysia pastoral conventions.

"The cross itself is the symbol of a new beginning, just as the death and resurrection of Christ brought forth salvation, may it also symbolise not the end – but the beginning of our journey towards deeper faith and trust in the Lord," he said.

The organising team led by Janestanstein Stephen, took the opportunity to express their appreciation and gratitude to all benefactors who had contributed towards the event's success.

Sr Gertrude Tan, IJS, described the event as a golden opportunity for many alumni to return to the school, and that the fellowship amongst those present added "a sense of friendship and camaraderie among them."

Aaron Lim



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2026)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This year, the Solemnity of the **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** falls on Saturday, August 15, 2026. Both this Solemnity and the following Sunday, 16 August, are holy days of obligation within our region.

For pastoral reasons, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei - in consultation with the Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission — has **transferred the celebration of the Solemnity of the Assumption to Sunday, August 16, 2026.**

Therefore, the Masses on this weekend will celebrate the Assumption, fulfilling your holy day of obligation.

Wishing you the Lord's abundant blessings.

H. Em William Cardinal Goh

H. Em William Cardinal Goh
President
Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission
July 14, 2026

CDM leaders recommit to Christ-centred leadership

GENTING HIGHLANDS: Renewed in unity aptly captured the spirit of the Church of the Divine Mercy (CDM) Leaders' Retreat 2026. From July 3–5, some 120 leaders from the parish's BECs and ministries gathered at the Archdiocesan Retreat House, Villa Dominic, Genting Highlands, for three days of prayer, reflection, fellowship and renewal.

Away from the demands of ministry, participants found space to reconnect with God, one another and their shared mission. The retreat opened with Vespers, fellowship and orientation, quickly fostering a spirit of friendship and community.

The retreat was inspired by Archbishop Julian Leow's call, *In the One, we are one*, placing unity at the heart of Christian leadership. Through honest sharing, group discussions and workshops, participants reflected on the common challenges of ministry and developed practical "Unity Response Plans" to strengthen collaboration across BECs and ministries.

A series of talks by Fr Xavier Andrew on *Healing Through Christ: Restoring the Heart of Leadership* encouraged participants to embrace servant leadership rooted in humility,

compassion and integrity. Through discussions, skits and prayer, leaders reflected on burnout, conflict resolution, mentoring and leading with renewed hearts.

One particularly moving moment came during the song *His Grace Will Carry You*, reminding participants that God continues to shape His people through life's struggles and uncertainties.

Another highlight was the Pilgrim Walk: Stations of Unity and Healing, where small groups reflected on Scripture themes such as healing broken relationships, unity in diversity, perseverance, gratitude and mission. The journey reminded participants that leadership is best lived in communion with God and one another.

The evening Holy Hour, Benediction and Healing Prayer Service became a profound encounter with God's mercy as many surrendered their burdens and experienced spiritual healing and peace.

On the final day, Sr Margarete Sta Maria FdCC challenged leaders to embrace synodal leadership through prayer, discernment and active listening to the Holy Spirit. She encouraged greater collaboration among BECs and reminded participants that lasting transforma-



The leaders during one of the group sharing sessions.

tion begins with hearts rooted in Christ.

The retreat concluded with Mass and a Commitment Ceremony, where leaders renewed their dedication to serve faithfully. The lighting of candles and signing of the Covenant of Mission symbolised their shared commitment to building vibrant BECs and parish life.

Participants left deeply inspired. BEC leader Molinih Jipius described the retreat as "a grace-filled encounter" that reminded leaders

to walk together in faith and serve as one family of God. Youth leader Adrian Thomas shared that although he arrived physically exhausted, he returned spiritually renewed and filled with hope.

As a lasting reminder, participants received an engraved door gift board bearing Joshua 24:15: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Refreshed and united, they returned home determined to live out the retreat's enduring message: In the One, we are one.

CHERAS: The Church of St Francis of Assisi brought together adult and youth leaders from the various ministries for a retreat on July 4, centred on their shared calling to be faithful stewards of God.

Speaker, Simon Rayan, began the retreat with a Christian Leadership questionnaire, inviting participants to examine themselves and discover the characteristics that shape the way they lead. For some, the results affirmed qualities they already recognised; for others, they revealed something they had never fully understood about themselves as leaders.

The experience was an eye-opener, reminding participants that before we can lead others, we must first understand ourselves. At times, leadership requires us to slow down, think and reflect before we act.

Participants were then divided into groups according to their leadership characteristics to discuss the question: "How can we invite more members to participate and remain committed to our ministries?"

Many ideas emerged, but two stood out: supporting weaker ministries and creating a sense of belonging. As stewards of God, we are called to look beyond the success of our own ministries and recognise those that may be struggling or less visible. No ministry should be left behind, because we are all part

Called to be faithful stewards of God



Leaders working together in one of the group activities.

of one Church and one mission. Likewise, people are more likely to participate and remain committed when they feel welcomed, valued, heard and truly know that they belong.

Danny Ignatius then brought these lessons to life through activities on how leaders should carry themselves and work with others. In the Tower of Faith activity, groups were challenged to build the tallest tower using straws,

string and tape, with a marshmallow placed at the top. However, some groups were given more straws while others had fewer.

The lesson was simple but powerful: those who have more are called to share with those who have less. True stewardship is not about competing to build the strongest ministry for ourselves. It is about recognising when others need support and being willing to share

our time, resources, gifts and strengths. The Church grows stronger not when one ministry stands tallest, but when we help one another rise.

Another meaningful activity was the Inner and Outer Circle. Leaders stood facing one another and were given the opportunity to say "thank you" or "I am sorry" to the person before them.

This simple act created a powerful moment of healing, reconciliation and gratitude. Leadership is not only about organising, planning or giving instructions; it is also about relationships. Sometimes, moving forward requires the humility to apologise, the grace to forgive and the courage to express gratitude. The activity gave leaders an opportunity to begin again, strengthen their bonds and continue serving with renewed hearts.

Throughout the retreat, one question remained at the centre of every reflection: Are we Christ-centric in our ministry?

We are not owners of our ministries but stewards. Everything entrusted to us, from our gifts and responsibilities to the people we serve, belongs to God. To be a faithful steward of God is to know ourselves, support one another, heal relationships, lead with humility and always place God at the centre. **Katelyn Ann Rayappan**



A member of the Bible group guiding a catechism student.

Growing together through God's Word

KUALA LUMPUR: The English- and Bahasa Malaysia Bible groups of the Church of the Risen Christ recently welcomed parishioners and catechism students to a Bible-sharing session centred on the inspiring story of Ruth and Naomi. Through this journey of faith, love and loyalty, participants discovered how the timeless wisdom of Scripture continues to guide and strengthen us amid the challenges of everyday life.

Participants were encouraged to bring their own Bibles as they read, reflected and grew together in God's living Word.

A highlight of the gathering was the Community Scripture Board, where parishioners were invited to write and share a Bible verse that has touched their lives. Together, these verses created a vibrant visual expression of the parish's shared faith journey, reminding everyone that God's Word remains alive and active in our

daily lives. The completed board will remain on display as a source of inspiration and reflection for both catechism students and parishioners.

The organisers hope the initiative will encourage families to make reading and reflecting on Scripture a regular part of their home life. By gathering around God's Word, families can find guidance, hope and wisdom for every season of life.

The parish also expressed its appreciation to Msgr James Gnanapiragasam and the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Bible Apostolate (KLABA) team for their encouragement and support in promoting Bible study within the parish.

The gathering provided an opportunity for families to deepen their faith, strengthen their love for Scripture, and grow closer to God and to one another. **Angelia Fredericks**

Go forth: From pew to purpose

Lucille Dass

PENANG: “The Church exists in order to evangelise.” These words of Pope Paul VI (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14), rooted in Christ’s Great Commission (Mt 28:19–20), became the guiding theme of the four-day *Empowering the Laity for Mission* (ELM) conference, held under the inspiring banner, “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’”

Organised by the Penang Diocese New Evangelisation Commission (PDNEC) in collaboration with CHARIS Penang, the conference drew 79 participants from Penang and beyond. Hosted by the Church of the Risen Christ, the programme featured 20 talks organised around four themes: *The Spirit, ...and the Bride, ...say, Come, and So, How Now?*

Welcoming participants, PDNEC chairman, Simon Wong, highlighted the conference’s invitational theme, calling the faithful to reach out to non-believers, practising Catholics and those who have drifted away from the Church. He reiterated PDNEC’s threefold mission: to promote, inspire and equip the laity for evangelisation.

“Bearing witness to God’s love is the mission entrusted to every dis-

ciple of Christ,” he said. “We are called to journey together as the people of Asia on this synodal path.”

The conference opened with Mass celebrated by Cardinal Sebastian Francis, with Friar Crispus Mosinoh OFM, parish priest of the Church of the Risen Christ, Msgr Henry Rajoo, and conference presenters Fr Pat Collins CM of Ireland and Fr Dr Charles Chiew of the Diocese of Keningau concelebrating.

Drawing inspiration from the conference theme, Cardinal Sebastian centred his homily on three words: Come. Empowered. Go.

“Who comes? All who thirst, just as Jesus thirsted on the Cross. Why come? To drink freely of the living water of God’s love so that, nourished and strengthened, we may go forth as missionary disciples,” he said.

Referring to St Teresa of Calcutta’s devotion to Christ’s words, “I thirst,” the cardinal reminded participants that every baptised person is called to become both — a wounded and healed disciple, empowered by the Holy Spirit to begin witnessing where they are. He concluded by praying that participants would be protected from temptation and attentive to the promptings

of the Holy Spirit through every Conversation in the Spirit.

A major highlight of the conference was the teaching of Irish Vincentian priest and internationally renowned speaker **Fr Pat Collins**, whose talks framed much of the conference.

Beginning with *The Power of the Holy Spirit in Daily Life*, he explored what it means to live a Spirit-filled life, stressing the need to pray daily for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Reflecting on the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23), he reminded participants that holiness is expressed through ordinary acts of love and faithfulness.

He also addressed more challenging topics, including the wounds within the Church and the need for healing. Asked which message he most hoped participants would take home, Fr Pat replied without hesitation: parish renewal and evangelisation, proposing his practical “head, heart and hands” approach to renewing parish life.

Bringing the contemplative dimension of mission, **Fr Dr Charles Chiew**, — missionary hermit,

counsellor and theologian — invited participants to rediscover the power of silence and attentive listening to God. Reflecting on Jesus’ hidden years and St Paul’s time in Arabia, he reminded everyone that fruitful mission is always born from prayer and quiet preparation. His thoughtful insights, often accompanied by gentle humour, concluded with a message of hope: “Tough times never last, but tough people do.”

Lay speaker Leoreen Heah Rodrigues reflected on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, encouraging participants to walk in the Spirit so that they may be purified, sanctified and become living invitations that draw others to Christ. She also reminded the audience that spiritual maturity is not measured by age but by one’s openness to God’s transforming grace.

Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, focused on the Church’s missionary mandate in Asia, affirming that mission is the DNA of the Church. In his second presentation, he explored baptism and mission within a synodal Church,

highlighting the inseparable relationship between communion, participation and mission.

On the final day, **Friar Michael Raymond OFM Cap**, challenged participants to discern their spiritual gifts and discover the passion God has placed within them. “Find what energises you,” he urged, “and fan it into flame for God’s work.”

Each presentation was followed by Conversation in the Spirit or question-and-answer sessions, allowing participants to reflect prayerfully on what they had heard. Daily Mass, praise and worship, healing ministry and Scripture-based activities enriched the conference experience.

As the conference drew to a close, one question remained before every participant: So, how now? The answer lies not merely in what was heard, but in responding to the Spirit’s invitation to “come” — and then to go forth as missionary disciples, bringing Christ’s hope and love to the world.



Letters to Editor

Include Latin in our Masses

Dear Editor,

I refer to the article entitled *ERLC meeting focuses on reverence, formation and liturgical unity* (HERALD, July 5, 2026).

In this article, Cardinal William Goh, who is the Archbishop of Singapore, mentioned that the Catholic Church already permits the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass (Extraordinary Form). Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, that is not the case in Peninsular Malaysia. Multilingual Masses are often offered, but Latin is never included.

I salute the Church of St Peter in Kuching, which had its dedication ceremony last year. Not only was the church’s design spectacularly Gothic, but the liturgy was celebrated in both Latin and English. I cannot describe the beauty of the Mass, which I was privileged to attend.

In light of the SSPX controversy, some parishes in other parts of the world are considering increasing the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) to satisfy the thirst of some of the flock for reverent and traditional liturgy.

Granted, I am aware, that most Malaysian priests are not trained to celebrate the TLM, but at least they can include Latin in some of the hymns and parts of the Mass. The *Anima Christi* sung in Latin is a beautiful example.

As far as I know, there is only one church in the KL Archdiocese that offers beautiful Latin chants in some parts of the liturgy.

To conclude, may I respectfully suggest to the powers that be, please try to include Latin in English and multilingual Masses. If Kuching can do it, I can’t fathom why KL can’t do the same.

Carol Daniel
Kuala Lumpur

Send your letters to ► 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.*

Love is worth fighting for

SEREMBAN: The Archdiocesan Family Life Commission (AFLC) of Kuala Lumpur held its sixth Retrouvaille weekend recently, bringing together 10 couples seeking healing, renewal and hope in their marriages.

Retrouvaille is a Catholic live-in programme designed for couples experiencing serious marital difficulties. Held annually at a confidential location to safeguard participants’ privacy, the weekend is led by a priest and three married couples who share their own journeys of overcoming challenges through faith, forgiveness and commitment.

This year’s programme marked a significant milestone. For the first time since Retrouvaille Malaysia began in 2017, the entire presenting team comprised Malaysians: Fr Edwin Peter, parish priest of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, and couples Francis and Angeline Chang, Canute and Lourett Magimay, and Joseph and Anita Pragasam. In previous years, the ministry relied on experienced presenters from Singapore, India and the Philippines while its local team was being formed.

Preparations for the weekend began months in advance under the leadership of coordinating couple Francis and Angeline Chang. Awareness was promoted through parish bulletins, posters, brochures, announcements and personal invitations across the archdiocese, with confidential conversations offered to couples



The first Malaysian local presenting team for Retrouvaille Malaysia. From left: Joseph and Anita Pragasam, Fr Edwin Peter, Lourett and Canute Magimay, and Angeline and Francis Chang.

seeking more information.

Held in the peaceful surroundings of Port Dickson, the weekend provided participants with the space to step away from the demands of daily life and focus on rebuilding their relationships.

Through personal testimonies, guided reflection and practical communication exercises, couples were encouraged to understand one another more deeply, forgive past hurts and rediscover the love that first brought them together. The honest sharing by the presenting couples reassured participants that they were not alone in their struggles and that God never abandons couples united in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

One participant shared that she came to understand that beneath her husband’s seemingly domineering manner was a genuine desire to care for her and their family.

Many also found the communication tools introduced during the weekend both practical and transformative.

Fr Edwin was available throughout the weekend to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the programme concluded with Sunday Mass.

Participants were reminded that healing is a journey, rather than a single event.

The Retrouvaille experience extends beyond the weekend through six follow-up sessions that provide continued support and encouragement for couples on their journey of healing and renewal.

For more information, contact Francis at 016-3330660, Angeline at 012-2072150, or email retrouvaille@familylife.archkl.org. All enquiries are treated with the strictest confidence.

Lucille Dass

PENANG: "It's a celebration! Because all are going to learn the art of forgiving." So declared Fr Raymond Raj in welcoming the 230 parishioners assembled for a formation, *4GIVEN: 1 Cross+3 Nails* by Jude Antoine at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (CHS).

Fr Raymond emphasised that forgiveness begets forgiveness and is grounded in love. "Don't act hypocritical – appearing more loving and forgiving to others but not to family members. Also, our bitter truth and irony of seeking and granting forgiveness only at the deathbed. Matthew 5:24 teaches us the need to be reconciled before offering gifts to God." He continued, "Focus, especially on the one person you find difficult to forgive..." and briefly shared his personal experience of how he finally attained peace after forgiving 'this one person.' He left us a stirring aide-memoir for all on how forgiveness and peace are clinched.

Parish Council chairman, Adrian Oyog, led in with, "Let our hearts be in the right place as we reflect and share with our neighbour on 'what brings me here?'" He stressed on fellowship with others and with God. His lead-ins to the segmented sessions were highly apropos to the day's topic, as was the praise and worship.

In his first talk, *Foundation of Forgiveness*, Jude highlighted and fleshed out some introductory points by Fr Raymond. "Forgive before it is too late. It is a grace that comes from God." He then elucidated that forgiveness is

Forgiveness: Where mercy meets misery

not merely an emotion; nor a moral obligation; it is a decision. It is not a know-how to be mastered, but courage to be mustered, through prayer and then, "just do it!" like Jesus did, on the Cross (Lk 23:34). Forgiving is crucial enough to be included in the faith-defining prayer Jesus gave us. If we say we are the body of Christ who is merciful and forgiving, why aren't we?

"Unforgiveness is a universal problem. Root of the problem? Pride." Small wonder, as pride is the first deadly sin! "Unforgiveness holds you captive until you choose to let go and find peace. When you forgive, you become strong; God elevates you." Jude reminded us how Pope John Paul II, out of his capacity for love, forgave Ağca for his assassination attempt on him. "God is love, and attracted to love. But the demon, like a leech, holds you captive to hatred out of his miserable attraction to hatred."

In his second session on *Forgiveness of Self*, Jude said, "The hardest to do! Guilt, a feeling of self-unworthiness, blocks us. Truly, none of us deserve, or can earn forgiveness." He



Jude Antoine during one of the sessions.

then explicated John 8:11 – "Our worth lies in God's love for us." We need to see ourselves through the lens of God. "No one is infallible" (Jn 8:7). St Augustine posits that Jesus' words to the accusers of the woman caught in adultery pricked their conscience, compelling them "to look into themselves, while leaving behind Misery (woman) and Mercy (Jesus). Jesus did not condemn her. He bid her 'Go and sin no more' – He gave a second chance. Our real enemy is our attachment to sin; it makes us feel unworthy, miserable, unloved by the self, unbelieving in God's forgiveness. Only divine forgiveness and divine love received with an open and sincere heart can give us the strength to resist evil."

Confession followed, with five priests in attendance.

Speaking next on *Forgiveness of and for Family*, Jude highlighted that we belong to a particular family chosen by God, for our salvation. "Yet, these are the people we fight with most, judge, and cause tremendous pain. At Fatima Our Lady revealed to Lucia that the last demonic attack would be to destroy mar-

riage and family. Hence, society at large." Referencing several biblical stories and scriptural quotes, Jude stated, "The solution is healing ... through you and me." Both parents and children need to regain their lost "spiritual authority" by exercising their free will to act against evil; heal brokenness through mercy and forgiveness; and restore familial relationships.

"The Church is a hospital with people who are hurt. If not healed, they will hurt others, in turn," said Jude when speaking on *Forgiveness for and within Community*. Problems within a community are unavoidable. "But remember, no one can hurt you without your permission. Your response is important. Don't take offence. Forgive." Jude cited Hebrews 12:14 – an exhortation to pursue peace for self and others. An irony, "The very person you despise is the person God chooses to make you holy! You pray for peace, but God gives you conflict! For good reason, to see your heart. Getting angry and staying angry are the cause for *skandalon* /stumbling – work of the enemy/misery". In the final analysis, "What is your choice?"



A section of the participants.

Pastoral Statement for Mass for the Care of Creation

Dear People of God,

On 3 July 2025, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published the decree on the formulary and biblical readings for the Mass for the Care of Creation.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, in consultation with the Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission, recommends that this Votive Mass may be celebrated on September 1 or any other weekday. If September 1 is a Sunday, the Sunday liturgy for that weekend will be used.

Wishing you the Lord's abundant blessings.

+ Wishing our Cardinal

H. Em William
Cardinal Goh
President
Episcopal
Regional Liturgy
Commission

July 17, 2026

+ Wishing our Cardinal

Rt Rev Joseph Hii
Teck Kwong D.D.
President
Episcopal
Commission for
Creation Justice

KUALA LUMPUR: Nineteen catechists from the Myanmar Catholic Community gathered at the Church of the Sacred Heart on Saturday, July 11, for a day of formation and renewal aimed at strengthening their ministry of handing on the faith.

The programme, jointly organised by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Commission (ACC) and the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development – Ministry for Migrants and Itinerants (AOHD-MMI), brought together male and female catechists from various ethnic groups for prayer, fellowship, reflection and practical formation.

Coordinated by Josephine Tey of AOHD-MMI, the formation was facilitated by Dr Steven Selvaraju, Director of the ACC, with the support of Adira Galusin from the commission.

In his morning session, Dr Selvaraju reflected on the vocation of the catechist, reminding participants that catechesis is more than imparting knowledge – it is about witnessing to Christ through one's life. He encouraged the catechists to continually deepen their own faith, recognising that authentic formation begins with personal conversion and a living relationship with God.

The afternoon session focused on practical aspects of catechetical ministry. Participants shared the joys and challenges they encounter in their communities, exchanged ideas and best practices, and discussed ways to strengthen catechetical formation for the coming year. The day concluded with the development of a collaborative pastoral plan for 2027.

Beyond the presentations, the gathering



Myanmar catechists gather for formation and renewal

provided an opportunity for the catechists to build stronger bonds as one community, support one another in their ministry, and renew their commitment to serving the young people entrusted to their care.

The formation underscored the importance of ongoing accompaniment and lifelong learning for catechists, equipping them with renewed confidence, practical tools and a deeper appreciation of their mission to proclaim the Gospel and nurture the faith of future generations. **Raymond Thang, Catechist, Myanmar Catholic Community**



Filipino bishops fight stigma of mental illness

MANILA: Filipino bishops are challenging deeply rooted misconceptions about mental illness, including the belief that it is a punishment from God or a sign of weak faith.

In their first-ever pastoral letter on mental health, issued after the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) 132nd Plenary Assembly from July 8-10, the bishops call for greater understanding, compassionate accompaniment and access to professional care.

"Mental illness is not a sign of weak faith, nor a punishment from God," the bishops write. "Like any illness, it deserves understanding, appropriate care and compassionate accompaniment."

Published on July 13 and signed by CBCP president Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa, the letter underscores the dignity of every person.

"Every person, whatever his or her condition, is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses an inalienable dignity that no illness can ever take away," the bishops state.

The pastoral letter comes amid what many describe as a silent mental health crisis in the Philippines, the world's third-largest Catholic-majority nation, where stigma continues to discourage many from seeking treatment.

According to the 2021 Philippine National Survey on Mental Health and Well-being, about 14 per cent of Filipino adults have experienced at least one mental health condition in their lifetime, while 22 per cent have attempted suicide at least once. Yet only about 5 per cent have sought professional help through counselling, medication or hospital care.

The bishops note that the problem is compounded by a shortage of mental health pro-



Bishops from across the Philippines process into Holy Rosary Parish in Oroquieta City before a Mass on Jul 9, 2026, during the 132nd Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Bishop Sean Mejia, apostolic vicar of Tabuk (CBCP News)

fessionals and treatment facilities, as well as persistent social stigma rooted in a blend of folk beliefs and religious traditions.

"Seeking medical or psychological help is not a lack of faith," they write. "God's healing often comes through the dedicated service of doctors, psychologists, counsellors and other caregivers."

The bishops also acknowledge that the Church has, at times, contributed to the pain experienced by families grieving the loss of loved ones through suicide.

"If you have experienced misunderstanding or felt unwelcome within the Church during your time of grief, we ask your forgiveness," they write.

They urge priests and pastoral workers

to accompany bereaved families with compassion and to celebrate funeral rites in accordance with current Church discipline. Citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, they remind the faithful that grave psychological suffering can diminish personal responsibility and that Christians should never despair of God's mercy.

The pastoral letter concludes with a commitment to build communities where those struggling with mental illness are welcomed rather than judged.

"Above all," the bishops write, "let us become communities where no one is ashamed to seek help, no one is judged for struggling, and no one is left to carry life's burdens alone." **CruX**



UISG Sisters and Dr Anabel Inge meet Her Majesty The Queen Camilla at Clarence House (© BuckinghamPalace)

Queen Camilla listens to Sisters' stories of faith amid conflict

LONDON: Queen Camilla welcomed representatives of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) to Clarence House on July 16, where Catholic Sisters shared moving accounts of their ministry among women, children and vulnerable communities in some of the world's most challenging regions.

The meeting came less than a year after the Sisters first met King Charles III and Queen Camilla during the royal couple's State Visit to the Holy See. It provided an opportunity to highlight the work of women religious serving across every continent, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict, human trafficking, poverty and climate change.

The audience also underscored the ongoing collaboration between the UISG and the British Embassy to the Holy See in promoting human dignity, resilience and the protection of vulnerable women and girls.

Dr Anabel Inge, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the British Embassy to the Holy See, described the audience as "a really special, joyous occasion" and said the invitation reflected Queen Camilla's deep appreciation for the work of Catholic Sisters.

"I don't think any of us expected that the sisters would be invited to Clarence House so soon," she said. "It really speaks to the quite deep appreciation of Her Majesty the Queen for the work of the religious sisters."

Having worked closely with the UISG over the past five years, Dr Inge praised the Sisters' quiet yet courageous witness, often carried out without recognition in some of the world's

most dangerous places.

"I have had the distinct impression that this work is often done very quietly, without fanfare, with great humility and in some of the world's most difficult places," she said.

She noted that what distinguishes the Sisters' ministry is their "trust, presence and continuity" within local communities.

"They are embedded in local communities," she said. "They will stick around even during conflicts, frequently putting themselves at great personal risk."

Sr Roxanne Schares, executive secretary of the UISG, said the meeting was an opportunity to speak on behalf of thousands of women religious who continue to accompany people experiencing war, displacement and hardship.

"Our sisters worldwide are really present with the people wherever they serve," she said. "Whether it's a university, a kindergarten, social work or pastoral work, their presence is a source of comfort, support and courage."

According to Sr Roxanne, Queen Camilla listened attentively and was deeply touched by the Sisters' experiences.

"I think she wants to be that support for the sisters globally in her own way and by her compassionate listening," she said.

The meeting at Clarence House highlighted the growing recognition of the invaluable contribution made by Catholic Sisters worldwide and demonstrated how governments, civil society and religious communities can work together in defending human dignity and bringing hope to those living on the world's frontlines. **Vatican News**

Priests' football tournament strengthens fraternity and vocations

HUANCAMELICA: A football tournament involving more than 150 priests from seven dioceses in southern Peru has grown into a celebration of priestly fraternity, communion and vocations.

The 2026 Clergy Champions tournament, held on July 2 in Huancavelica, brought together priests from Puno, Cusco, Abancay, Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Huancayo and Tarma.

The final between Huancavelica and Cusco ended in a draw and was decided by a penalty shootout. After the Huancavelica goalkeeper saved Cusco's final attempt, Fr Santiago Salazar scored the winning penalty, sending seminarians and supporters rushing onto the field in celebration.

Fr José Raúl Ayuque Tornero, a priest of the Diocese of Huancavelica and one of the organisers, said the tournament began about 10 years ago as a friendly gathering among priests who had studied together at the major seminary in Abancay.

"It was simply a get-together of friends," he said. "Its roots are fraternity and friendship among priests."

The tournament has since become an established tradition in the Peruvian Andes, bringing together younger, older and newly ordained priests from different dioceses.

Fr Ayuque said the gathering was about much more than competition.

"Beyond the tournament, there was the joy of sharing the mission God has given us as

priests," he said.

He added that sport could also help awaken vocations by showing young people that priests live ordinary human lives while remaining committed to prayer and service.

"Life must be built through communion, teamwork, solidarity and the presence of our brothers," he said.

Fr Doroteo Borda López, another participant, described the league as an experience of communion.

"Sport unites, heals and is also part of spirituality," he said. "On the field, we play, run and sometimes disagree, but afterwards we continue sharing our lives."

The tournament also drew families, seminarians and local supporters, with marching bands adding to the festive atmosphere.

Abancay finished fourth, Ayacucho third and Cusco second, while Huancavelica lifted the championship trophy. The Archdiocese of Huancayo will host the next edition.

Organisers hope to expand the tournament in future to include priests from Ica, Arequipa and Tacna, making it a wider gathering for southern Peru.

Fr Ayuque said the event showed that the priestly mission was not confined to prayer or pastoral duties alone.

"All the realities of life can and must be offered to God," he said. "Sport prepares us to encounter the Lord and helps us face the world with greater joy and optimism." **EWTN News**



The dioceses of Cuzco and Huancavelica face off in the final for the Clergy Champions League 2026. (Father Carlos López Bonifacio, Diocese of Huancavelica)



From one shepherd to the next

Richard Chia

By the time Archbishop Peter Chung reached the canonical retirement age of 75 in 2003, the Archdiocese of Kuching had undergone a remarkable transformation. The foundations laid over nearly three decades — through local priestly formation, stronger lay leadership, pastoral renewal and a renewed missionary spirit — had prepared the Church for its next chapter.

On June 21, 2003, Pope John Paul II appointed Auxiliary Bishop John Ha as the second Metropolitan Archbishop of Kuching. Having served as auxiliary bishop since 1998, Archbishop John had worked closely alongside Archbishop Peter and was well acquainted with both the strengths and challenges of the local Church. His installation on July 16, 2003 marked not so much a change of direction as the continuation of a shared pastoral vision.

The Church he inherited was vibrant and growing. Across Sarawak, the Catholic population had reached 292,170, comprising 133,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese of Kuching, 90,026 in the Diocese of Sibü and 69,144 in the Diocese of Miri. Yet rapid growth continued to place increasing demands on the Church's pastoral resources, particularly in priestly formation and the care of expanding parish communities.

Rather than introducing sweeping changes, Archbishop John devoted his episcopate to consolidating the foundations established by his predecessor. He strengthened pastoral structures, encouraged greater collaboration between clergy and laity, and supported the continued growth of the archdiocese's pastoral commissions. His pastoral leadership reflected a quiet conviction that the Church grows strongest when its people are well formed, actively involved and united in mission.

Recognising that the future of the Church rested with its young people, Archbishop John also gave strong encouragement to youth ministry and vocation promotion. Under his leadership, youth apostolates continued to expand, providing opportunities for young Catholics to grow in faith, leadership and missionary discipleship while discerning their own vocation within the life of the Church.

His leadership extended beyond the

Every generation of the Church is shaped by shepherds who build on the work of those who came before them. In this 26th instalment of our series on the journey of the Malaysian Church, we conclude our Sarawak chapter by tracing how the Archdiocese of Kuching passed from one generation of leadership to the next while remaining steadfast in its mission.

Archdiocese of Kuching. From 2013 to 2016, Archbishop John served as President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, representing the regional episcopal conference at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family convened by Pope Francis in Rome in October 2014.

During the launch of the archdiocese's 40th anniversary celebrations in 2016, Archbishop John reflected on the journey of the local Church by paying tribute to Archbishop Peter Chung's enduring legacy. He highlighted three lasting achievements that had shaped the archdiocese: the establishment of St Peter's College Seminary to form local clergy, the development of parish and archdiocesan pastoral councils that empowered the laity, and the nurturing of local religious congregations.

Celebrated under the theme *Pentecost: Christ Filling the Church with the Power of the Holy Spirit*, the anniversary was not merely a celebration of history but a renewed commitment to the Church's mission of evangelisation.

A new generation

Another significant chapter began in 2017.

Although bishops normally submit their resignation at the age of 75, Archbishop John requested early retirement upon reaching 70. Pope Francis accepted his request and appointed Auxiliary Bishop Simon Poh as the third Metropolitan Archbishop of Kuching on March 20, 2017.

Archbishop Simon represented a new generation of Malaysian bishops, together with Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibü and Bishop Richard Ng of Miri. Long before his episcopal appointment, he had become widely known for his pastoral ministry among young people, serving extensively in youth and campus ministry, vocations, seminary formation and parish life. These experiences gave him a close understanding of the hopes, struggles and aspirations of a new generation of Catholics.

At his installation at the Cathedral of St Joseph, Archbishop Simon immediately invited the archdiocese to embark on a process of Review, Reassessment and Renewal (3R). Rather than beginning with programmes or policies,

he encouraged the faithful to listen — to God, to one another and to the realities facing the Church. Through parish consultations and grassroots participation, the archdiocese sought to discern together the direction the Holy Spirit was leading the local Church.

Echoing words first popularised by Archbishop Julian Leow of Kuala Lumpur, Archbishop Simon urged that the voices of "the least, the last, the lost and the little" must be heard. His vision was one of a listening Church in which every parishioner, including those in the most remote *kampungs*, had a role in shaping the Church's future.

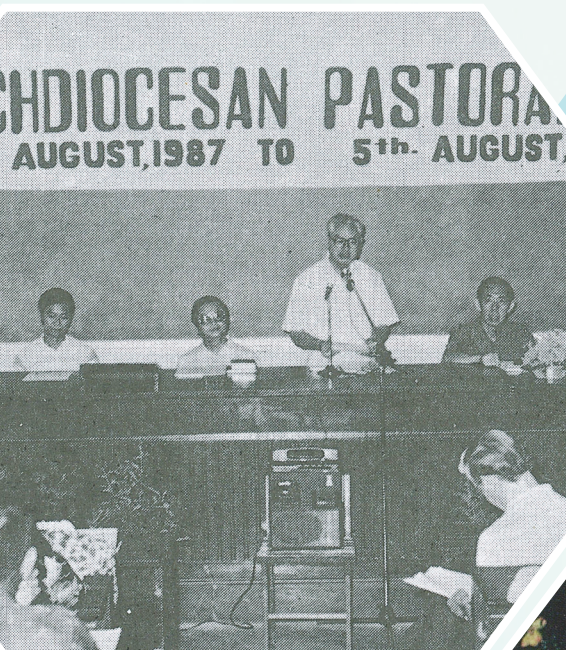
His pastoral approach reflected the wider vision of Pope Francis — a Church that accompanies people, walks with them and forms missionary disciples rather than passive observers. Drawing from his years of ministry among young people, Archbishop Simon consistently challenged Catholics to live their faith courageously within their families, workplaces and society.

By the time Archbishop Simon assumed office, the Archdiocese of Kuching had grown to approximately 197,000 Catholics across 11 parishes, serving communities comprising Chinese, Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Indian and numerous other ethnic groups. The diversity that had long characterised the local Church remained one of its greatest strengths.

Looking back, the story of the Archdiocese of Kuching is also the story of three shepherds who faithfully built upon one another's

work. Archbishop Peter Chung laid the foundations by nurturing local vocations, empowering the laity and strengthening the Church's pastoral structures. Archbishop John Ha consolidated those foundations through steady leadership, pastoral formation and regional service to the wider Church. Archbishop Simon Poh has continued that journey by fostering a more listening, participatory and missionary Church.

Together, their ministries reflect the quiet but remarkable growth of the Church in Sarawak — a Church rooted in faith, strengthened by shared responsibility and continually renewed by the Holy Spirit as it looks confidently towards the future.



The gift of presence

This is a true story that ties very well with our annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly celebration, which is specifically meant to emphasise the pastoral care of the elderly, bridge the generational gap, and recognise the vital role grandparents play in passing down faith and preserving family roots. Let's call her Auntie Lucy. Her family often complained that she shouted and screamed at home. To them, these outbursts were disruptive, embarrassing, and difficult to understand. Naturally, their response was to scold, reprimand, or try to correct her behaviour. They wanted her to stop. Yet the more she was corrected, the more isolated she seemed to become.

Then, one morning, Auntie Lucy was with us when she suddenly said that she felt overwhelmed. There was an urgency in her voice, a quiet desperation that she was struggling with. We moved to a private room where she could feel safe. There, almost in a whisper, she admitted, "I feel like screaming."

What struck me most was what came next.

"I'm sorry," she added immediately.

Even in the midst of her distress, she felt the need to apologise.

I wheeled her outside. We sat together in the open air for a moment. Then I looked at her and said gently, "Let's scream together."

Then we screamed. It was raw, unfiltered, and wonderfully human.

When we stopped, she looked at me with complete disbelief.

"You screamed louder than me!" she exclaimed. I laughed.

"Let's do it again," I replied. "Let's release all that frustration."

So, we screamed a second time. This time, something changed.

A smile appeared where tension had been moments before. The shame that had weighed down her shoulders seemed to loosen its grip. Her eyes softened. The energy that had felt trapped inside her finally had somewhere to go.

When I invited her to scream again, she gently shook her head.

"No," she whispered. "It's enough."

Tears filled her eyes as she thanked me.

Later, as I wheeled her to the car, she

hugged me tightly.

"I sayang you," she said.

It was one of those special moments that stay with you long after it has passed.

On the surface, nothing remarkable had happened. There was no sophisticated intervention, no carefully designed therapeutic technique, no clinical breakthrough. We simply screamed together.

Yet something profound had taken place.

Instead of trying to pull her into my world, I had entered hers.

Instead of correcting her experience, I had shared it.

Instead of treating her emotions as a problem to be solved, I treated them as something worthy of being witnessed.

In doing so, both of us were changed.

She said something I will never forget. "Isn't it amazing," she marvelled, "to ease out of the pond together?" What a beautiful image.

So often, when someone is suffering, we stand on the other side and shout instructions. We tell them to calm down, think positively, behave appropriately, or control themselves. We remain dry while asking them to find their own way out of deep water.

But healing often begins when someone is willing to step into the pond with us.

To be honest, I had not planned this as a strategy. I was not thinking about dementia care frameworks or behavioural interventions. I simply felt her frustration and the crushing weight of her embarrassment.

She was trapped in a painful cycle. She struggled to regulate emotions that felt overwhelming. She carried the burden of a diagnosis that many people feared and misunderstood. She lived with the effects of multiple antipsychotic medications, each bringing its own list of side effects. She was trying to navigate a world that increasingly demanded abilities she no longer possessed while offering little understanding in return.

In that moment, I saw beyond the dementia.

I saw a human being in pain.

More than that, I saw a pain I recognised.

Perhaps that is why the connection came so naturally. The details of our lives were different, but the feeling was familiar. Most

of us know what it is like to feel overwhelmed. Most of us know what it is like to carry emotions we cannot easily express. Most of us know what it feels like to be misunderstood.

The difference was that she had fewer ways to communicate her struggle.

By giving her my complete attention and screaming even louder than she did, I was not merely helping her release frustration. I was communicating something deeper.

That her pain is real.

That her feelings make sense.

That she does not need to apologise for being overwhelmed.

And when I watched her anxiety dissolve into a wide smile, I knew we had arrived somewhere important together.

How often do we feel overwhelmed, especially when we are unwell, vulnerable, or misunderstood? We struggle under the weight of powerful emotions while still being expected to meet society's standards of composure and productivity. We are told to keep going, keep smiling, keep functioning.

Now imagine adding a loss of language to that experience.

Imagine knowing what you feel but being unable to find the words.

Imagine having thoughts, fears, frustrations, and desires that remain trapped inside because the pathways needed to communicate them have become damaged.

Imagine being surrounded by people who interpret your distress as misbehaviour rather than suffering.

This is the reality faced by many people living with dementia.

As communication becomes more difficult, something tragic often happens. People begin to speak around them rather than with them. Decisions are made without their involvement. Their preferences are overlooked. Their personhood slowly fades in the eyes of others.

When language disappears, people sometimes act as though the person has disappeared too.

Friends withdraw because conversations



Dancing with Dementia
Dr Cecilia Chan

become awkward. Family members become exhausted. Society becomes impatient.

People are described as difficult, challenging, disruptive, or burdensome.

Yet beneath every label is a human being who continues to experience love, fear, loneliness, joy, grief, embarrassment, hope, and longing.

A diagnosis does not erase humanity.

Unfortunately, dementia remains deeply misunderstood. A recent survey in Malaysia suggested that many people still believe dementia is contagious. Such misconceptions reveal how far we still have to go in addressing stigma and promoting understanding.

Once someone acquires the label of dementia, behaviours that might otherwise be interpreted as expressions of distress, fear, confusion, or unmet need are often reduced to symptoms requiring management.

But we should pause and ask ourselves an uncomfortable question.

What do we mean when we say we are "managing" a person?

Are we helping them live well?

Or are we simply making their behaviour easier for others to tolerate?

Too often, care becomes focused on control rather than connection. The person is reduced to a collection of symptoms. Success is measured by compliance rather than well-being. Care narrows to medication schedules, feeding routines, toileting needs, and risk management.

This things matter, of course.

But they are not enough.

A human life is more than a body to be maintained.

These matters a lot because dementia does not discriminate. It crosses every social, economic, cultural, and educational boundary. One day, any of us may find ourselves carrying that label.

How would we want others to respond?

Would we want to be treated as a burden?

Would we want our emotions dismissed simply because we struggled to communicate them?

Perhaps as we celebrate World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, we will choose to build bridges like our late Pope Francis used to remind us.

Dr Cecilia Chan is a Gerontologist and Dementia Advocate and Activist. She can be contacted via WhatsApp (013-4384388).

Watching the jubilarians seated in the front rows, I found myself reflecting on decades of prayer, ministry and faithful service lived one day at a time. Each had once said "yes" to God's call without knowing where it would lead. Nourished by the Eucharist and inspired by the Dominican Sisters who came before them, they have handed on a rich legacy of faith

The grace of lifelong fidelity

through humble, courageous discipleship.

The sisters were celebrating milestones ranging from 50 to 80 years of religious life. Behind each anniversary lay countless acts of love, sacrifice and service, touching lives in schools, parishes, communities and

beyond. Their vocation stories revealed a common truth: while they may have imagined one future, God had prepared something far greater.

Sr Dominic Savio Estorge entered religious life in 1956 expecting to spend her life teaching in New Orleans. Instead, her vocation unfolded through more than six decades of education, leadership, mentoring and writing. Along the way, she embraced the changes brought by the Second Vatican Council, shifting educational landscapes and the formation of the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Her advice remains simple yet profound: stay rooted in God's love rather than in expectations of how life "should" be. By remaining attentive to God's love, she says, we are better able to share that love with others.

A similar openness shaped the life of Sr Rachel Sena. Beginning her ministry in Arizona, she later served Indigenous communities in Guatemala during years of violence and oppression. There she accompanied the Maya people through education, healthcare and pastoral care,

while witnessing exploitation of both people and land. Her advocacy eventually placed her at risk, leading her to continue her ministry among Guatemalan migrants in Florida, where she co-founded the Maya Ministry Family Literacy Programme. Today, she ministers among the Pascua Yaqui and Tohono O'odham peoples in Arizona, drawing inspiration from their enduring faith and hope.

Listening to these women convinced me that religious life is not about resisting change but embracing it with trust. Again and again, they responded to the suffering of God's people with compassion, becoming contemplatives in action who loved with God's own heart.

When asked if she had ever considered leaving religious life, Sr Dominic replied without hesitation: "How could I? I remain faithful because I am constantly shown God's grace and love."

Their witness reminds us that a life surrendered to God becomes a blessing for both the Church and the world. Jubilees are not merely celebrations of longevity but powerful testimonies that God continues to call women and men to proclaim the Gospel with faith, courage and hope. **Ana Gonzalez, Global Sisters Report**



At the motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace in Columbus, Ohio, jubilarians renew their vows on June 7, 2026, at a gathering to celebrate their milestone anniversaries of religious life, ranging from 50 to 80 years. (Courtesy of Ana Gonzalez)

The transitions we often forget to prepare for

As Asia's populations age, retirement, caregiving, widowhood and declining health are reshaping millions of lives. While governments focus on healthcare, pensions and long-term care, churches are uniquely placed to help people navigate the deeper social and spiritual transitions that accompany growing older.

A few months ago, I stepped away from full-time university service after decades in academia. Friends congratulated me on "finally" reaching retirement. Some joked that I would at last have time to relax. Others asked about travel plans, hobbies or long-postponed projects. The conversations were familiar.

Retirement is often presented as a destination: work hard, save diligently, and one day you arrive. Yet I soon discovered it is less an ending than a profound transition.

The routines that had structured my days disappeared. Meetings vanished from my calendar. Relationships with colleagues naturally changed. The role that had shaped much of my identity for decades no longer defined everyday life.

As a community psychologist, I realised my experience was far from unique. Across Asia, millions are navigating similar transitions. Some are retiring. Others are caring for ageing parents or spouses. Some are adjusting to widowhood, while others are learning to live with declining health and increasing dependence on others.

These experiences raise an important question: why do ageing societies spend so much time preparing financially for later life, but so little time preparing socially and spiritually?

Japan, where I live, is often described as the world's most aged society. South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, China and many other Asian countries are moving in the same direction. Governments rightly focus on healthcare, pensions, labour shortages and long-term care. Yet ageing is not merely a medical or economic issue. It is equally about relationships, identity, community and meaning.

The changes we rarely discuss

When people think about ageing, they often imagine physical decline. Yet many of the most significant changes are social rather than biological.

Retirement brings more than the loss of a job. It can mean losing routines, professional networks and a role that has anchored life for decades.

The same is true of widowhood. The death of a spouse alters daily rhythms, relationships and future expectations. A lifelong companion is gone. Decisions once shared must suddenly be made alone.

Caregiving represents another major transition. Across Asia, increasing numbers of middle-aged and older adults are caring for ageing parents, spouses or relatives. While deeply meaningful, these responsibilities often reshape careers, friendships, finances and emotional well-being.

Even physical decline is experienced socially. Losing the ability to drive, walk long

distances or travel independently affects far more than mobility. It changes how people participate in community life, gradually shrinking opportunities for connection.

Community psychologists describe these moments as "ecological transitions" — changes in roles, relationships and social environments that reshape how people engage with the world. What makes these transitions difficult is not simply the change itself, but the disruption of the relationships and communities that once provided stability.

The loneliness hidden within transition

Much has been written about loneliness in recent years. In Japan it has become a national concern, and similar conversations are emerging across Asia as populations age and family structures evolve.

Yet loneliness is often misunderstood. It is not merely an individual feeling. It frequently accompanies life's major transitions.

A retired worker loses daily contact with colleagues. A widow loses a lifelong companion. A caregiver has less time for friends. An older adult with declining mobility becomes less able to participate in community life.

In each case, what disappears is not simply social contact but also a sense of belonging and purpose.

Throughout my career, research has consistently shown that people flourish when they experience meaningful relationships and opportunities to contribute to the lives of others. This need does not diminish with age. If anything, it becomes even more important.

Yet modern societies often focus on helping people survive life's transitions while paying far less attention to helping them stay connected through them. We prepare people financially for retirement but rarely socially. We provide medical care for illness but often overlook the relationships that sustain people through it.

Why churches matter

This is where faith communities have a unique role.

During my years of teaching and worshipping in different countries, I have



come to appreciate something remarkable about churches. Few institutions accompany people throughout every stage of life.

They celebrate births, nurture children, bless marriages, support families, visit the sick, accompany the dying and comfort the bereaved.

In many congregations, people journey together through decades of shared experiences. That continuity is increasingly rare in modern society and profoundly important for older adults navigating life's transitions.

A church cannot eliminate illness, reverse ageing or prevent loss. But it can ensure that people do not face those realities alone.

A retired teacher may discover new opportunities to mentor younger members. A widow may find companionship among those who understand grief. A caregiver may receive practical support and encouragement. An older adult with declining mobility may continue to experience belonging through regular visits and enduring relationships.

These may appear to be small acts, but they meet some of our deepest human needs.

Beyond receiving care

One mistake ageing societies often make is assuming that older adults primarily need services. Services are important, but older adults need more than care. They need opportunities to contribute.

Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson described this as "generativity" — the desire to invest in future generations and leave something of lasting value. That desire does not disappear after retirement. Many older adults possess a lifetime of wisdom, faith and resilience. The question is whether communities provide opportunities for those gifts to be shared.

Healthy congregations often do this naturally. Older members teach Sunday school, mentor younger families, volunteer, offer hospitality, pray, listen and encourage.

These quiet acts rarely make headlines, yet they strengthen both individuals and communities. One of the great tragedies of ageing societies would be to see older adults primarily as recipients of care rather than contributors to communal life.

Preparing for the last third of life

This raises a challenging question: how well are churches preparing people for the transitions of later life?

Many congregations invest heavily in marriage preparation, parenting, youth ministry and faith formation. These remain essential. Yet retirement, caregiving, widowhood and end-of-life transitions often receive far less attention.

How many churches offer a discussion group on retirement? A support group for caregivers? A class on grief and loss? A mentoring programme connecting older and younger members?

As Asia grows older, these questions will become increasingly urgent. The future of ageing societies will depend on more than healthcare budgets and pension systems. It will depend on whether people continue to experience connection, purpose and hope throughout life's transitions.

Walking through change together

The most important transitions in life are rarely marked by diplomas, certificates or promotions. They are the quieter moments that reshape our relationships, identity and sense of purpose.

Retirement. Loss. Caregiving. Ageing.

These experiences touch nearly every family and every community. The question is not whether we will encounter them, but whether we will face them alone.

For Christians, ageing is not simply about preparing for death. It is about growing into the fullness of life with God while continuing to serve others.

Churches cannot solve every challenge associated with ageing. But they can offer something no government programme, healthcare system or technological innovation can fully provide: companionship, belonging and communities where people continue to matter.

As Asian societies continue to age, perhaps that is the lesson we most need to remember. The challenge is not simply helping people live longer, but helping them remain connected, purposeful and hopeful throughout life's final transitions.

The transitions we so often forget to prepare for may ultimately be the ones that matter most. **Toshiaki Sasao, Global Catholic**



Have we forgotten the kingdom of God?

In recent weeks, I have come across a couple of different instances where the disposition among some Christians has been found wanting.

First, I have seen hate speech directed at refugees or even victims of atrocities, especially in phone messaging groups.

Second, I have noticed a passive attitude and even helplessness that ordinary people display towards our political and economic situation.

Many Christians tend to succumb to this passivity. They assume that only the Second Coming of Jesus can resolve all the world's problem.

As they feel despondent and dissatisfied with the world around them, some look for scapegoats – whether it is a particular ethnic group, refugees from a certain country, or even the 'Palestinians'.

Pointing fingers at others is easy. But does it absolve us from own failure to act within our own circles of influence?

Contrast this helplessness with what

Jesus said. He declared that the Kingdom of God is already among and within you.

St Paul builds on this by reminding us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. In the ancient world, a temple was revered as a place where heaven and earth overlapped.

But after Pentecost, that venue shifted away from physical buildings. Now the Holy Spirit resides within individual believers.

What does this mean? It means that Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom of God two millennia ago. He left it to us to cultivate and nurture this kingdom. Remember how we pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

So we are far from helpless. The challenge is now ours. We are called to be the salt and light of the world. We have to place our light at the top of the hill, so that all can see this kingdom present among us.

We are agents, individually and as a community, empowered to build God's presence in the world.

When asked to name the greatest

commandments, Jesus pointed to the first and second commandments: love God with all your heart and soul, and love your neighbour as yourself.

How does this fit into the kingdom of God that is within and among us? We are called to radically redefine who our neighbour is – recognising the presence of the Lord in anyone who needs our help, especially the strangers among us.

Consider the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Why did Jesus pick a Samaritan passer-by to compliment? Surely, it was for the shock value.

In that era, the Jewish people and the Samaritans deeply despised each other. The animosity stemmed from the Assyrian conquest in 722 BC, leading to intermarriage with foreigners and the setting up of an alternative temple in Mount Gerizim.

So the Samaritan was the very last person Jesus' Jewish audience would expect to be singled out for praise. Imagine their shock!

A modern-day equivalent in our part of the world would be the 'Parable of the Good Rohingya'.

The level of hate speech directed at the Rohingya in recent months has been astonishing and worrying. Tragically, even some Christians – hopefully a small minority – indulge in this ethnic bashing.

Most of us have barely interacted with the Rohingya, except perhaps when they are hired for simple jobs, if at all. Yet some in Malaysia are quick to stereotype them based on the actions of a few.

The early Christians saw their mandate differently. They did not wait for others to act. They built early 'hospitals' and

sheltered orphans. They cared for plague victims.

Ultimately, the Christian community grew into such an irresistible force that it became the state religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Theodosius. Some argue that the empire actually co-opted the faith for political purposes.

We are called to be stewards of Creation and builders of the kingdom.

This means seeing the world through the eyes of God, whose Spirit resides within us.

God created all the people, living creatures, trees and plants, the forests, rivers and seas.

If any of these are harmed, it is an attack on God's kingdom. If any group of people is singled out for genocide, atrocities, torture, hate speech, it is an assault on the Kingdom of God. Today, we must add environmental crimes and destruction to the list.

So instead of finding someone to blame for the state of the world or society around us, let's interact with the strangers we may meet in our everyday life – whether it is people of different faiths, migrant workers, refugees, or people with disabilities.

Let us also act as stewards of the ecosystem, protecting it from destruction by human predators whose greed blinds them.

We are called to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). To this end, we can support the many groups working among the poor and the marginalised and for environmental justice. There are so many different causes out there!

So what are we going to do to build the kingdom?

Anil is a freelance writer and activist based in Penang. He believes we are all called to build the kingdom of God in this world.



Sunday Observer

Anil Netto



Rohingya men, women and children were forced to flee Myanmar and seek protection. (UNHCR/Roger Arnold)

Most of us don't begin life knowing that we're in a race. And yet, from the moment we are born, we are smack dab in it. The race in which mothers compare whose baby begins to walk first, whose baby sprouted teeth first and whose baby said 'Dada', or some such equivalent, first. And it doesn't stop there. It extends into school years, higher education years and into the rest of life itself.

One morning, I found myself in one of KL's ever present rush hour jams thinking, "Is this all there is to life? The perpetual rat race?" I looked around at the faces of drivers in the other cars. Sour. Frustrated. Impatient. Buried in their hand phones. Irritated. Not one had a pleasant face plastered on. And yet we're all chasing the same thing. Money. Let's not get shy here. This is the number one steeplechase we all run in daily. A highly demanding pursuit of material benefits that requires exceptional endurance, staying power and high levels of tenacity. God knows what we need to make a living. And yet, as Christians, we are called to do so much more.

In 2 Timothy 4:7 the Apostle Paul ponders his life and great ministry, shortly before his passing. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." If you're well versed with your Bible, you will know that Paul's race wasn't a sprint. It was an endurance marathon. He suffered much for Christ in his ministry of 32 years. He was beaten, jailed, over-



Yours 'faith'fully

Georgina Fernandez

Finishing well

worked to exhaustion, hungry, whipped nearly 200 times, tortured, shipwrecked thrice, stoned and nearly killed many times. Yet, he didn't give up.

Peter, who led the early church in Jerusalem, faced arrest many a time and was even thrown into prison for his faith. He was crucified by Emperor Nero in Rome,

upside down though, because he felt he wasn't worthy to die in the same manner that Jesus did.

John ran his race well, and died of natural causes but not before surviving being boiled in oil and exiled to the isolated island of Patmos.

These are some of the stalwarts of the faith we espouse today. Strong men who walked with Jesus and saw His face. Who were so impacted by His words that they dropped everything to spread His Gospel. And if their race included so much more than just building up treasures here on Earth, aren't we called to do the same?

As followers of Christ, we are called to keep our focus on Him. Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer

and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." We are to lay aside the things that slow us down to reach our final goal of being with Jesus. Our hurdles in this race include the weight of sin, worldly distractions, or any such thing that hinders our spiritual life in Christ. We are to emulate Christ, who rejected the call of this world and fulfilled His Father's will, endured the Cross and is currently seated in full glory at the right hand of God's throne.

The Christian life is not easy and often it has been compared to a long-distance race. Not a sprint. Not a dash. And it needs to be run with endurance and perseverance with frequent dips into The Word for nourishment and replenishment.

I'll end with this story about Hamish, whose race of 35 years as a carpenter didn't look at all like the path he had mapped out for himself as a young man just starting out life. Fresh faced and shiny eyed, Hamish dreamed of global mission work. He saw himself working with Christian organisations bringing The Word, aid and good news to the marginalised and lost. That didn't happen. As life would have it, his father fell seriously ill and Hamish had to run the family wood shop to support his three siblings. For years, the temptation to succumb to bitterness loomed heavy over him. And he felt trapped in a situation that wasn't of his own making. One day,

whilst reading Hebrews 12, the words 'run with endurance the race that is set before us' leapt out at him. And he realised that his race track didn't run through a mission field somewhere in Cambodia. It ran right through the saw-dust covered floor of his wood shop.

Hamish ran his race differently from then on. He ran with integrity. Refusing to cut corners on his work. He ran with generosity. Quietly waving repair fees for those struggling financially in his town. And he ran with focus. Fixing his eyes on Jesus instead of being sore about his broken dreams.

And when he passed, the church was packed to the rafters, for the man that he was – kind, generous and honest. A young man stood up to speak tearfully. "Hamish didn't just build furniture. When my life was falling apart, he helped me rebuild it and in doing so showed me just what the heart of Jesus looked like."

Hamish didn't run anyone else's race. He ran the course God had marked out for him. And for sure he heard Jesus say what we all want to hear when we get to be with him one day, "Well done good and faithful servant. You have finished well."

Georgina is a writer, home chef, wife and doggy mama. She is of Indian origin and has lived in Tanzania, Muscat, Mumbai and is now based in Kuala Lumpur. She is an ex-advertising creative director turned Home Chef and is the co-owner of Five & Two Fine Foods, with her husband, John. In her spare time, she loves to travel, play the keyboard and craft.



Fr Dr Clarence Devadass

Formed by Christ, guided by virtue

Walk into any bookshop and the shelves on leadership are filled with theories, models, and strategies for success. Yet for those involved in ministry, a deeper question remains: What truly makes a good leader in the Church? Beyond management skills and practical strategies, ecclesial leadership requires spiritual depth, pastoral sensitivity, and moral credibility.

In every generation, people seek leaders who can guide them through uncertainty, inspire confidence, and create meaningful change. Whether in government, business, education, or community organisations, effective leadership is often defined by qualities that transcend circumstances. For the Church, however, leadership carries a unique responsibility: to lead not only with competence but with faithfulness to Christ and His mission.

This reflection highlights five qualities at the heart of authentic ecclesial leadership: courage, innovation, integrity, clarity, and empathy. These virtues form the foundation of leadership in a Synodal Church that seeks not only to accomplish meaningful outcomes but also to build trust, credibility, and communion.

For Christians, these qualities find their fullest expression in Jesus Christ, whose life reveals the true meaning of servant leadership.

Courage: The ability to act despite uncertainty

Leadership often requires difficult decisions. There are moments when leaders must choose between what is popular and what is right, between short-term comfort and long-term good. Courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to act faithfully despite uncertainty.

A reflection on Ecclesial Leadership

Good leaders do not avoid challenges, difficult conversations, or necessary decisions. Instead, they take responsibility and provide guidance to those who depend on them.

Jesus demonstrated extraordinary courage throughout His ministry. He challenged injustice, confronted hypocrisy, defended the vulnerable, and remained faithful to His mission despite opposition. His example reminds leaders that true courage is not about power or control but about standing for truth and serving others, even at personal cost.

Innovation: Finding new ways forward

The world continues to change rapidly, requiring leaders who can adapt with creativity and wisdom. Innovation is not simply about technology or new ideas; it is about seeking better ways to respond to challenges and serve people more effectively.

Innovative leaders are not trapped by tradition or afraid of change. They recognise that growth requires openness, reflection and, sometimes, experimentation. They encourage others to contribute ideas and discover new possibilities.

Jesus was innovative in His approach to teaching and leadership. Through parables, personal encounters, and acts of compassion, He communicated eternal truths in ways people could understand. He transformed the understanding of leadership itself, showing that greatness comes not from status or authority, but from humility and service.

Integrity: The foundation of trust

While courage inspires action and innovation

encourages progress, integrity keeps leadership grounded in what is right. Integrity means consistency between words and actions, honesty in decision-making, and faithfulness to one's values.

Leaders with integrity build trust because people know they can rely on them. Trust allows communities to grow, teams to collaborate, and relationships to flourish.

Jesus embodied perfect integrity. His actions reflected His teachings, and His life demonstrated humility, compassion, honesty, and faithfulness. He showed that leadership begins with character and that true credibility is earned through authenticity.

Clarity: Providing direction and purpose

People look to leaders for guidance, especially during times of uncertainty. Without clarity, confusion can easily arise. Effective leaders communicate a clear vision, establish priorities, and help others understand their purpose.

Clarity is not merely about giving instructions; it is about helping people see why their contribution matters. A meaningful vision inspires commitment and unites people toward a common goal.

Jesus communicated with remarkable clarity. His message of faith, hope, love, and service was simple yet profound. Whether speaking to crowds or individuals, He offered a clear path towards the Kingdom of God and invited people to participate in His mission.

Empathy: Understanding and valuing people

Leadership is ultimately about people. Beyond strategies and achievements, leaders must recognise and care for those they serve. Empathy allows leaders to understand the

experiences, struggles, and hopes of others.

Empathetic leaders listen, show compassion, and treat every person with dignity. Jesus revealed this throughout His ministry. He reached out to the sick, the poor, the excluded, and those considered unworthy by society. He listened to those who called out for help, shared in human sorrow, and restored dignity to those who had been rejected.

Jesus' leadership was rooted in presence. He did not simply offer solutions; He encountered people personally. His example reminds leaders that genuine care is not a weakness but a sign of maturity and strength.

The complete leader?

Courage, innovation, integrity, clarity, and empathy are powerful qualities individually, but their true impact emerges when they work together. For Christians, Jesus Christ remains the perfect model of leadership — one rooted in service, sacrifice, humility, and love.

No leader is perfect, no church is perfect. Leadership is a lifelong journey of learning, conversion, and growth. Yet those who seek to cultivate these virtues become better equipped to inspire trust, overcome challenges, and serve their communities faithfully.

In today's changing world, the question is not only who will lead, but how they will lead. Authentic ecclesial leadership is ultimately measured not by position or achievement, but by the values leaders embody, inspire, and the example they give towards a synodal church on mission.

Fr Clarence serves as the parish priest of the Church of St Anthony and is also the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Our sometimes stingy hearts

John Muir once asked, "Why are Christians so reluctant to let animals into their stingy heaven?"

The same might be said of us as churches: why are we so reluctant sometimes to welcome others into God's mercy and to our communion tables?

We certainly can't use Jesus as our model in doing this. Looking at the Gospels, there is never a recorded incident where Jesus laid down some moral or religious condition to sit down at table with Him.

Our model is rather the well-meaning disciples of Jesus, who, like us, tried to protect Jesus by sheltering Him from various groups, including little children. But always in the face of this we hear Jesus saying clearly: *Let them come to Me!* Small wonder He sent His disciples away so He could have a meeting with the Samaritan woman who had been married five times.

What I am about to suggest is a risk since, admittedly, the issue of intercommunion is more complex than can be resolved simply by saying Jesus welcomed everyone (even as we may never ignore that).

Regarding the question of intercommunion: There is wide agreement theologically that baptism gives you access to the communion table. As Christian denominations, we recognise the validity of each other's baptisms. So why can't any Christian go to any Christian church and be welcome at the communion table?

Because each denomination is its own family — and normally families eat at their own tables. Normally you go to your own denominational family for communion. But this is a pastoral consideration not a theological one.

However, occasionally we do eat at someone else's home and table. Most mainline theologies of the Eucharist draw on this distinction and distinguish between "Occasional" intercommunion (funerals, weddings, faith gatherings) and "Regular" intercommunion. The former makes sense pastorally, the latter doesn't. You only eat regularly at someone else's table if you are a member of the family or household.

Given that pastoral concern, churches have had varied norms, ranging from wide welcome to strict exclusion, depending on how their leadership assesses the situation. For example, in the Roman Catholic Church, throughout the nineteen sixties and seventies, Roman Catholics generally welcomed others to receive communion on special occasions. Then, during the nineteen eighties and nineties, more and more, those presiding at the Eucharist on those occasions were asked not to publicly invite those from other churches to receive communion. Further, after the year 2000, those presiding at the Eucharist were asked to publicly disinvite those from other churches from receiving communion. More recently, there has been a growing shift back to a more

welcoming stance.

What's to be said about this shift back and forth? First, that this is a pastoral rather than a theological issue, and pastorally it can be argued legitimately in different ways. Where there is common agreement is that everyone wants the various Christian Churches to someday be one family with one communion table for all. The disagreement is on how to get there.

Some believe and argue that having to "fast" from intercommunion will make us hungrier to become one Church and will help motivate us to work more proactively for ecumenism. Others disagree and argue that being more welcoming about intercommunion will motivate us to work proactively for ecumenism. Who's right?

There's a logic in both arguments, but I confess that my heart lies with the latter group. In my experience, excluding each other from the Eucharist table tends to harden rather than soften our divisions, just as welcoming each other at the Eucharist table tends to soften the suspicions of each other we have nursed for the last five hundred years since the Reformation.

As well, I disagree with the belief and argument that any one church (in my case the Roman Catholic Church) is the only fully authentic expression of Church and that other denominations somehow lack authentic discipleship and therefore we would in some way cheapen the Eucharist and the real

presence by allowing non-Roman Catholics to receive it at our communion table.

Here, like the well-meaning but mistaken disciples of Jesus, we are trying to protect Jesus from persons we feel are somehow not ready to have this encounter and intimacy with Him. We need to remember that Jesus always met this with the words: *Let them come to Me! Jesus doesn't need nor want our protection.*

Moreover, the love, mercy, and embrace of God which Jesus incarnated and preached was the antithesis of stingy. It was wide, inviting, and universally embracing. God has no favourites, except that every one of us is God's particular favourite. God is not a private or tribal deity, owned and controlled by any one faith, religion, denomination, or Church.

This is not to say that all faiths, religions, and Churches are equal and all the boundaries that separate them should be erased. No. But it is to say that we must not be so reluctant to incorporate others in our stingy understanding of Jesus' universal embrace.

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

LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER

Dear children,

Have you ever found something really special? Maybe a RM1 note on the ground, your favourite toy you thought was lost, or a gift you had always wanted. How did you feel? Excited? Happy? You probably didn't want to let it go!



Now imagine finding a treasure chest filled with gold and jewels. Would you keep it? Of course! A treasure is something so valuable that you would do almost anything to have it.

In today's Gospel, Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is like a hidden treasure and a priceless pearl. The people who found them happily gave up everything to have them.

Does Jesus want us to sell all our belongings? No! He wants us to know that nothing is more valuable than having God in our lives. His love, friendship, and promise of eternal life are worth more than anything money can buy.

Jesus also tells the story of a fishing net. The good fish are kept, reminding us that every day we should choose kindness, honesty,

love, and forgiveness.

Now think about this: What is your greatest treasure? Your family, friends, faith, and God's love are treasures that last forever.

The greatest treasure you will ever find is Jesus. When we choose Him every day, we discover a joy that never ends.

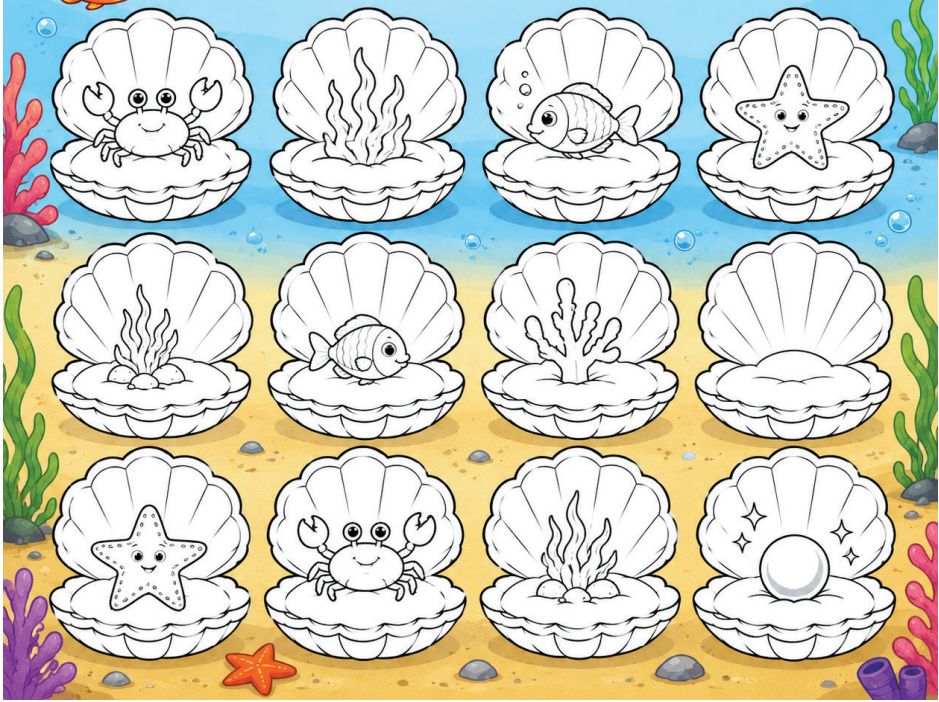
Love, Aunty C



FIND THE PEARL

Can you find the pearl of great price?
Colour the shell with the pearl!





Treasure Hunt Word Search

Instructions: Find the hidden treasures of God's Kingdom in the puzzle

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

WORDS TO FIND:

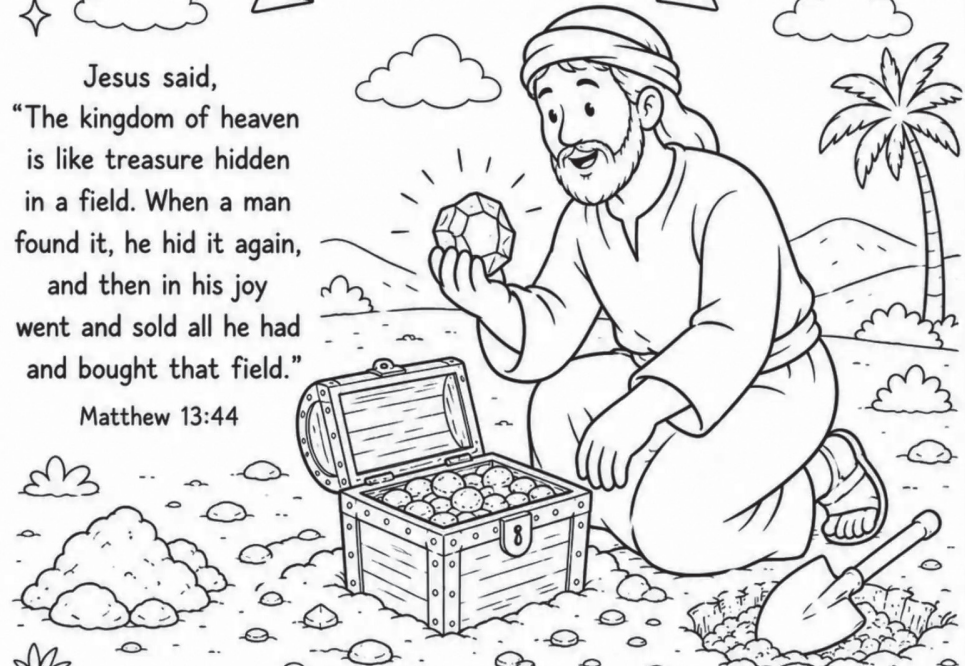
TREASURE	FORGIVE	✝ JESUS ✝	FISH
KINDNESS	PRAYER	FAITH	GOD
KINGDOM	PEARL	LOVE	NET



THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

♥ MATTHEW 13:44 ♥

Jesus said,
"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."
Matthew 13:44



♥ The kingdom of heaven is very valuable. It is worth more than anything else! ♥



FILL THE FISHING NET

INSTRUCTIONS:
Draw lines to place only the good fish inside the net.



- Green fish: "I shared with my friend."
- Yellow fish: "I prayed."
- Purple fish: "I teased my friends."
- Pink fish: "I helped my parents."
- Red fish: "I lied to my parents."
- Teal fish: "I forgave my sibling."
- Blue fish: "I hit my sibling."

youth



Stella Maris celebrates Malaysia's story in *Gemilang*

KUALA LUMPUR: History, culture and patriotism came alive on stage as students from the Stella Maris family of schools delivered a breathtaking theatrical production, *Stella Maris on Stage: Gemilang*. While the production celebrated Malaysia's history and nationhood, it also reflected the mission of Catholic education to nurture young people who value justice, peace, unity and respect for every person.

Held over the weekend of July 3 and 4 at the auditorium of Stella Maris International School, Damansara, it was the second instalment of the *Stella Maris on Stage* series following its debut in 2019. The series celebrated the extraordinary talents of students across the Stella Maris community.

Presented through a compelling storyline, the audience followed three students on a history assignment set by their

class teacher. Their search for the nation's past unfolded into a series of dramatic live performances depicting Malaysia's struggle for independence, from the hardships of the Second World War and colonial rule to the triumph of *Merdeka*. Powerful scenes portrayed encounters between Japanese and British forces and the local population, capturing both the sacrifices and hopes that shaped the nation.

The production also celebrated Malaysia's multicultural identity, highlighting the contributions of Malays, Chinese, Indians and the diverse ethnic communities of East Malaysia in the nation's journey.

A vibrant showcase of cultural performances — including *Astik* and *Zapin* dances, *Pencak Silat*, a contemporary Golden K-Pop segment, scenes inspired by the legendary *Puteri Gunung Ledang*, a harmonious choir performance, and a moving enactment of the *Tugu Negara* — brought colour, emotion and national pride to the stage.

The production united students from Stella Maris International School (Primary and Secondary), Sekolah Menengah Stella

Maris Pudu and Sekolah Rendah Stella Maris Ampang, making it a truly collaborative Stella Maris event under the patronage of Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon.

The opening performance on July 3 was graced by the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Most Rev Julian Leow, who was welcomed by Brig Gen (Rtd) Dato' Richard Robless, Chairman of the Council of Directors of Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon, together with the school chaplain, principals and senior management. His presence underscored the Church's encouragement of initiatives that promote national unity, mutual respect and appreciation of Malaysia's rich cultural diversity — values that resonate strongly with the Gospel's call to love our neighbour and work for the common good.

Dato' Robless described the production as "a fitting tribute to Malaysia's remarkable journey towards independence and a celebration of the unity, resilience and diversity that define our nation," adding that the students had brought history to life "through music, drama and dance" while making the entire Stella Maris family im-

mensely proud.

Parent Brian Gerald Pereira, whose son performed in the production, praised *Gemilang* as "a heartfelt tribute to Malaysia's rich cultural heritage" and said it "beautifully reminded us that despite our diversity, we are united by a shared history, shared values, and a common hope for the future."

The entire production was conceived and directed by Helena Flavia Fernandez, Head of Music at Stella Maris International School, whose vision, together with months of dedication from teachers, staff, volunteers and students, transformed *Gemilang* into an inspiring celebration of faith, nationhood, unity and the performing arts.

As the curtain fell on *Gemilang*, the audience departed with more than admiration for an outstanding performance. They left with a renewed appreciation of Malaysia's history and a hopeful reminder that the nation's future rests in the hands of young people who are not only talented but also united in purpose and inspired to serve the common good.

NOT JUST GROWING OLD, BUT GROWING UP

PUCHONG: In today's world, it is easy to become distracted by achievements, pressure, and temporary happiness, causing us to forget to ask ourselves: Where is God in my life? Throughout our three-day-two-night confirmation camp in Port Dickson, we were reminded that faith is not simply about attending church, but about truly knowing, loving, and serving God in our daily lives.

From the very first day, we reflected on how life is often filled with struggles, confusion, temptation, and pressure that can slowly pull us away from God. However, we learned that the Holy Spirit is never distant, but constantly guiding, strengthening, and leading us back whenever we lose our way. Through group discussions and personal sharings, many of us began reflecting more honestly on our own relationship with God and the kind of people we are becoming.

On the second day, we reflected on our purpose as human beings — to know, love,



and serve God. We were challenged to distinguish between actions that build the works of God and those that destroy them, reminding us that our words and actions should bring others closer to Christ. The sessions on discipleship also taught us that being Catholic is far more than fulfilling

obligations; it means following Christ through prayer, worship, Mass, service, and sacrifice. We were reminded that Confirmation is not the end of our faith journey, but the beginning of our mission to become ambassadors of Christ and share the Good News with others.

The camp also deepened our understand-

ing of Mary as a model of complete trust in God. One meaningful image compared the Church to a boat sailing through a storm, where the storm represented life's struggles, the Church represented the boat carrying God's people, and Mary acted as the rudder guiding us closer to Christ. The story of St Carlo Acutis further reminded us that holiness is possible even for young people today, and that the closer we remain to God, the more our lives are transformed by His presence.

On the final day, we reflected on the Four Marks of the Church — One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic — and learned that the Church is a living communion united through Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. One phrase that deeply impacted many of us was: "Grow up, not just grow old." This reminded us that while age increases naturally, true growth comes from spiritual maturity, wisdom, and faith. **Joshua Ryan**

Doubt & Faith

A night of honest conversations and growing in Christ

KUALA LUMPUR: The youth from the Church of the Good Shepherd welcomed the Cornerstone Disciples for an evening titled *Doubt & Faith*. Held on Saturday, July 4, the gathering brought young people together through praise and worship, inspiring messages, personal testimonies and small-group discussions. It provided a welcoming space where participants were encouraged to voice their questions, deepen their faith and encounter God's love within a supportive Christian community.

The event centred on an important truth: having doubts does not mean a person's faith is weak. Rather, doubts can become opportunities to seek God more deeply and grow in relationship with Him. Throughout the evening, the Cornerstone Disciples fostered an atmosphere where participants felt comfortable sharing their struggles without fear of judgement.

During the group-sharing, many youth reflected openly on their faith journeys, speaking honestly about

their questions, struggles and the ways God had remained present in their lives.

One participant, **Vasshon Kevin**, shared that the event helped them realise that having doubts does not make anyone weak but can strengthen believers as they continue seeking God's truth. The group discussions were especially meaningful, reminding everyone that each person carries silent battles and uncertainties. Vasshon added that faith is what sustains and strengthens believers, and appreciated the warm and welcoming environment created by the Cornerstone Disciples and the GSC youth. Leaving the event, he felt encouraged to trust God even when the answers were not immediately clear.

For **Rachelle Riona**, the evening was a reminder to remain grateful for God's many blessings while cherishing the fellowship shared throughout the programme. One of the most memorable moments was Terence's moving testimony about



his mother and grandmother, followed by the closing prayer, which left her deeply touched. Although it was her first time meeting many of the youth, she immediately felt welcomed by the warmth and hospitality of the Cornerstone Disciples. Inspired by the gathering, Rachelle hopes to set aside at least 15 minutes each day for prayer and Scripture reading, reflect more deeply on God's Word, and share what she learns with her family and friends. She also looks forward to building lasting friendships through future youth gatherings.

Tiffany Priscilla shared that her biggest takeaway was realising that doubt is not something to fear or hide but an opportunity to seek God more intentionally and deepen one's faith. Listening to others share their personal experiences reminded her that she is not alone in facing moments of uncertainty. The gathering affirmed that having doubts does not signify weak faith but is a natural part of spiritual growth. Inspired by the experience, Tiffany hopes to continue bringing her questions before God, remaining steadfast in prayer and Scripture reading, and trusting in His faithfulness even when she does not fully understand His plans.

For **Arielle Lyssa**, every part of the programme — from the praise and worship to the personal testimonies and small-group discussions — was meaningful and engaging. The reflection on the Apostle Thomas, who struggled

to believe even after encountering the Risen Christ, left a lasting impression on her. Jesus' words, "Because you have seen Me, you believe; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe," reminded her that faith and doubt can coexist on the journey of discipleship. She was especially moved by the reflection, "You cannot alter your past, but you can bring your past to the altar," recognising that God's grace is greater than any mistake, fear, and failure. Arielle also commended the Cornerstone Disciples for creating a warm, welcoming and faith-filled environment where everyone felt accepted, supported and encouraged to grow closer to God.

The youth expressed their sincere gratitude to the Cornerstone Disciples and all the speakers for generously sharing their time, wisdom and hearts throughout the evening. Their openness and honesty reminded everyone that faith is not about having all the answers but about continuing to trust God through every season of life.

As the gathering concluded, participants left encouraged to draw closer to God through prayer, Scripture, honest conversations and steadfast faith. *Doubt & Faith* served as a powerful reminder that God welcomes every question, walks with us through every uncertainty, and faithfully strengthens those who continue to seek Him.



A joyful celebration of faith

KAJANG: The Church of the Holy Family was filled with joy and thanksgiving as 80 confirmands from the English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin and Tamil-speaking communities, together with students from the Campus Ministry, migrant workers, and RCIA candidates, received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

This celebration marked the culmination of a two-year journey of faith, during which the confirmands deepened their understanding of the Catholic faith, discovered the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and prepared themselves to embrace their calling as mature disciples of Christ.

The Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow and concelebrated by parish priests, Fr Michael Chua, Fr Bonaventure Rayappan, and Fr Philip Chua.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian encouraged the newly confirmed to become fertile soil that welcomes the Word of God, allowing it

to take deep root in their hearts. He reminded them that only by remaining rooted in God's Word can they face the challenges of the modern world with courage, wisdom, and unwavering faith.

The celebration was a witness to the work of the Holy Spirit, as each confirmand publicly renewed their faith and received the sacred anointing, strengthening them to live as active witnesses of Christ in their families, schools, workplaces, and communities.

As a parish community, we give thanks to God for this memorable occasion and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide and empower each newly confirmed to live out their faith with conviction, love, and joyful service.

We also give thanks for all the catechists involved in the preparation of the newly confirmed towards the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Archbishop Julian Leow and the clergy praying over the confirmands.

Be strengthened by the Spirit

MASAI: On July 5, 14 students received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Church of St Theresa. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Bernard Paul, and concelebrated by parish priest, Fr Paul Sia. In his homily, the bishop spoke about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit strengthens young people to remain steadfast in their faith. He explained that challenges, trials, false teachings, a lack of courage, and other negative influences can be overcome through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the support of the faith community. He added that the Holy Spirit blesses us with the three "Gs" — Grace, Goodness, and Good Works — encouraging everyone to live out these gifts in their daily lives.

The students completed the Malaysian Catechetical Series (MCS) Textbook 10 in the previous year. From February to June 2026, they underwent a special formation programme focusing on the social teachings. The sessions covered important topics such as *Pornography*, *Understanding Homosexuality*, *the Sacrament of Matrimony*, *Islamisation and Conversion Laws in Malaysia*, and *Choosing a Career*. These sessions were conducted by Deacon Petrus and his team, comprising Dr Melton Fernandez, Lawyer Mary Pereira, and Andrew Chew.

These topics were chosen to help young people better understand the moral and social challenges they may encounter and to guide them in making informed, faith-filled decisions in their lives.

The students also participated in spiritual sharing and discussions on the Call to



Bishop Bernard laying his hands on the confirmand.

Priesthood, Religious Life, and Lay Missionary Service, led by Seminararian Joseph Yuvaraja. Over five sessions, he encouraged the candidates to reflect more deeply on their faith and discern God's call in their lives at a young age.

In addition, Caroline Charles, the parish Caritas/POHD leader, shared with the students the importance of serving those in need and living out the Gospel through charitable works.

As part of their final preparation for the sacrament, Fr Paul Sia conducted a recollection programme to strengthen the candidates spiritually and to remind them of their responsibilities as confirmed Catholics. He encouraged them to remain faithful to Christ, actively participate in the life of the Church, and continue their journey of faith with commitment and courage after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. **Nancy Ghanapragasam**

A melody of faith that lives on

KOLKATA, India: Family, friends and admirers gathered at Christ the King Church on July 12 for the 40-day memorial service of renowned musician-composer Anthony Dilip Rozario, *pic*, celebrating a life that profoundly shaped Bengali liturgical music and inspired countless people through faith, humility and service.



Rozario, who passed away on June 2 at the age of 68, was remembered not only as a gifted composer but as a man of deep integrity, gentleness and unwavering trust in God.

Opening the memorial, his nephew Richard Nayan Rozario described his uncle as a "Messenger of God" and a perfectionist who pursued excellence with quiet dedication in both music and his professional career as an accountant.

Longtime collaborator Pranay Dutta paid tribute to Rozario's contributions to social-awareness initiatives, while fellow musician John Shovan Gomes recounted his musical journey — from learning the tabla as a young boy to becoming a pioneer in adapting Gregorian chant into Bengali, making the Church's rich liturgical heritage more accessible to local congregations.

His wife, Rikta Rozario, described the gathering as a celebration of both his life and enduring legacy. Reflecting on his final months of illness and hospitalisation, she recalled the peace that characterised his life until the very end.

"Till his last breath, Dilip always urged me to maintain peace despite all irritants," she shared.

Video presentations and tributes from siblings, relatives and friends painted the portrait of a man who was gentle, calm and deeply creative. He delighted in simple Bengali cuisine, encouraged others to think beyond convention, and touched lives not only through his music but through his quiet witness.

The memorial concluded with a moving performance by the Kolkata Christian Choir, which Rozario founded. As the choir sang, it became a fitting tribute to a man whose melodies continue to resonate in churches across Bengal, reminding the faithful that while his voice has fallen silent, his legacy of faith, peace and sacred music will continue to inspire generations to come. **Matters India**

Venezuela quake death toll nears 5,000

CARACAS: The death toll from the twin earthquakes that struck northern Venezuela on June 24 has risen to 4,829, as humanitarian agencies and the Catholic Church intensify relief efforts for thousands left homeless.

In an update posted on July 15, National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez said 16,740 people had been injured, while 17,907 were left homeless. More than 20,800 people are currently sheltering in 106 temporary camps.

The magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 earthquakes — the strongest to hit Venezuela in more than a century — also damaged 856 buildings, caused 190 structural collapses, and triggered 1,284 aftershocks, complicating rescue and recovery efforts.

According to UNICEF, the widespread destruction of homes and schools has created "a major child-focused humanitarian emergency," placing children, pregnant women and persons with disabilities at particular risk.

The Catholic Church has launched a broad international response to support survivors. The Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council (CELAM) has appealed to Catholics to contribute to Caritas Venezuela's campaign, *Tras el temblor, el amor* (After the earthquake, love).

In its latest report, Caritas

Venezuela said it had distributed more than 13,000 metric tonnes of humanitarian aid within the first 10 days after the disaster, including water, food, hygiene supplies and clothing.

The relief effort is being supported by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the overseas humanitarian agency of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. CRS emergency communications coordinator Robyn Fieser, who visited the affected areas, described entire city blocks reduced to rubble.

"It looked a little bit like a war zone," she said, urging people to "keep Venezuelans in their hearts."

Catholic communities around the world have also responded. Caritas Bolivia has announced a nationwide collection on July 26, while the president of the German Bishops' Conference, Bishop Heiner Wilmer, has urged Catholics to pray for the victims and support Caritas Venezuela's emergency relief efforts.

"Through them, our aid reaches those in need directly," Bishop Wilmer said. "We must not abandon the victims of the earthquakes and must help now."

Church leaders acknowledge that while emergency assistance is underway, rebuilding shattered communities and accompanying traumatised survivors will take years. **OSV News**

MEMORIAM

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In loving memory of

Patrisha Diniah David

In loving memory of someone so special who brought light and happiness into our lives. Though time may pass, the love and memories we shared will remain eternal.

Fondly remembered by Dollin, Standlee, Daisy, Cecilia Paul and Sarah Jane Foley (Niece).

13.03.1956 - 12.07.2025

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
2 Timothy 4:7

Beatrice Fernandez

Age: 78

Returned to her Heavenly Home on Sunday, 22nd March 2026.

Leaving behind beloved Husband, Alex Charles, beloved sons, David and Edmund and beloved daughter Maryanne, family, together with a host of relatives and friends to mourn her passing.

3rd Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Martin Loo Yew Phin

Born : 14.11.1932
Departed : 31.7.2023

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Forever in our hearts.

17th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Gurunathan Selbadurai

7th March 1944 – 29th July 2009

"For we are well aware that when the tent that houses us on earth is folded up, there is a house for us from God, not made by human hands but everlasting, in the heavens"
2 Cor 5:1

May you rest in the arms of the Lord who formed you from the dust of the earth.

Deeply missed by wife, children, grandchildren, all family members and friends.

NOTICE

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48th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Sauriamah De Cruze

Departed: 24-07-1978

Though the years have passed by, Mum, you are always remembered in our hearts and, most of all, in our prayers.

Always remembered and missed by your loved ones.

31st Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Mejar (Rtd) Christopher Ratnasingam KAT, psc

Departed: 22-07-1995

In thoughts, dad, you are always near, still loved, still missed, still very dear. But happy memories we keep forever Of days when we were all together. In heaven you rest, no worries, no pain but in our hearts you will always remain.

Always loved and missed by Wife, children, daughters-in-law, son-in-law, grandchildren and loved ones.

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REST IN PEACE

'I came with a hunger for genuine charity'

CASTEL GANDOLFO: Pope Leo XIV has called for a Church that opens its doors to everyone, describing his own desire as a "hunger" for justice, charity and reconciliation.

"I came without a prepared speech, but I did come with hunger — hunger for justice, hunger for genuine charity, hunger for a Church that truly knows how to open its doors, to welcome and receive everyone; where there is love for all and no one is an enemy, where all of us know how to live reconciliation, forgiveness and peace," the Pope said.

He was addressing around 200 guests, including nearly 40 children living in vulnerable circumstances, during a special "Lunch with the Pope" at Borgo Laudato Si' in the Pontifical Gardens of Castel Gandolfo. The gathering was organised with the Diocese of Rome and Catholic charitable organisations as part of the Borgo Laudato Si' initiative.

The day began with Mass celebrated by Cardinal Fabio Baggio, director general of the Laudato Si' Centre for Higher Education, and concelebrated by Archbishop Luis Marin de San Martín, prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Charity. Guests also toured the Borgo before sharing lunch with the Holy Father.

Welcoming those present, Pope Leo reaffirmed the Church's mission to make God's love visible to every person.

"One of the pope's titles is Pontiff —



Pope Leo XIV speaks at a lunch with vulnerable people from the Diocese of Rome at Borgo Laudato Si', in the pontifical gardens of Castel Gandolfo, Italy, July 11, 2026. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

a builder of bridges," he said. "Today we too want to build a bridge with all of you, with your families and with the society in which we want to live — a society marked by justice, where the causes of poverty and injustice can be overcome."

"This is the Church we want to be," he added.

Thanking those who organised the gathering, the Pope said every shared meal becomes an opportunity to build "a different world, a world of hope" where Christ is present among His people.

Noting that today's world is too often scarred by violence, hatred and discrimination, he urged Christians to build

communities rooted in solidarity, mutual care and peace.

"Let us work together and strive always to be this kind of Church: a Church of justice, peace and love," he said.

Before the meal, Pope Leo prayed for God's blessing upon those gathered, their families and all who suffer, asking that they may find "peace, forgiveness and reconciliation." **Vatican News**

Pope to Asia's Church: Be builders of communion

VATICAN: Pope Leo XIV has called on the Church in Asia to become "builders of communion" by placing God "on the horizon of our actions and the human person at the centre of our decisions," as bishops from across the continent prepare to gather for the 12th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC).

In a letter appointing Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop Emeritus of Bombay, as his Special Envoy to the assembly in Jakarta from July 20–26, the Pope urged the Church not to fear "getting our hands dirty at the building site of our time."

Echoing his encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* (No. 16), Pope Leo wrote: "Be builders of communion, not architects of Babel; servants of the Kingdom that is coming, not masters of towers destined to collapse."

Writing in Latin, he expressed the hope that the Church in Asia would "never cease to flourish in faith and in humanity" as it responds to the challenges of the modern world with courage and hope.

The Pope stressed that the Church's mission must place the poor, the sick, migrants and the little ones at its heart. Quoting Psalm

85, he said that these "rejected stones" are destined to become the cornerstone of a society where "love and truth will meet, and justice and peace will embrace."

He urged the faithful to reject division and, instead, work together to build a world rooted in human dignity and the Gospel.

"Let us halt the construction of yet another Babel and join forces in building what is good, so that humanity may never lose its beauty and the world may once again recognise, in the heart of every human person, the place where God desires to dwell," he wrote.

Malaysia will be represented at the FABC assembly by Archbishop Julian Leow of Kuala Lumpur, Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching and Bishop Richard Ng of Miri. They will join bishops from across Asia in discerning the future mission of the Church on the continent in the light of the Pope's call to foster communion, strengthen human dignity and proclaim the Gospel with renewed missionary zeal.

Pope Leo concluded by entrusting Cardinal Gracias and all participants in the plenary assembly to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Joseph. **Vatican News**

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE & BRUNEI

All Saints and Christmas 2027

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Next year, the **Solemnity of All Saints** falls on Monday, November 1, 2027. This Solemnity is a holy day of obligation within our region.

For pastoral reasons, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei - in consultation with the Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission - has decided to **bring forward the celebration of All Saints to Sunday, October 31, 2027.**

Please take note of the following liturgical schedule:

- Saturday, October 30, 2027:** Sunset Masses will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints
- Sunday, October 31, 2027:** All Masses will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints
- Monday, November 1, 2027:** Masses will follow the liturgy for the 31st Week in Ordinary Time

Please also note that the **Solemnity of Christmas**, which falls on Saturday, December 25, 2027, remains unchanged.

Wishing you the Lord's abundant blessings.

H. Em William Cardinal Goh
H. Em William Cardinal Goh
President
Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission
July 14, 2026

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2027 Departures

 10D Camino of Jesus Holyland RM 12,900 / PP 17 January Fr Joe Nathan, OFM	 13D Vatican, Sicily & Malta RM 17,900 / PP 21 February Msgr Jude Miranda	 16D Alpine Marian Shrines RM 17,900 / PP 2 April Fr Joe Nathan, OFM
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