

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.

There will be no issue on June 23, 2024. Our next issue will be on June 30, 2024.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. *2 Cor. 5:6-7*



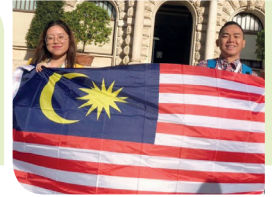
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Putting out with faith into the deep and dark interiors

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# Priests are not meant to walk alone

**VATICAN:** Pope Francis emphasised the importance of priests living within a network of fraternal relationships, stating, “we are not meant to journey alone.” He also expressed his gratitude for the generosity with which the majority of priests work, despite facing many difficulties.

The Pope said this at a meeting with participants in the Dicastery for the Clergy’s Plenary Assembly in the Vatican on June 6. During the meeting, the Pope focused on three main aspects: the ongoing formation of priests, the promotion of vocations, and the permanent diaconate.

The Pope greeted the participants in the audience with affection, taking the opportunity to express his gratitude to priests and deacons worldwide.

“I have often warned against the risks of clericalism and spiritual worldliness, but I am well aware that the vast majority of priests devote themselves with great generosity and faith to the good of the holy People of God, bearing the burden of many labours and sometimes facing challenging pastoral and spiritual difficulties.”

The Pope addressed each of the three themes discussed in the Plenary, starting with the central issue of formation.

He emphasised that this formation must be ongoing, especially in a constantly changing world like the one we live in today.

“We are called to consolidate, strengthen, and develop what we have learned in the seminary,” he said, “as part of a path that helps us mature, grow spiritually, find suitable languages for evangelisation, and go deeper into what we need in order to adequately address the new issues of our time.”

For the Pope, the issue of the loneliness experienced by many priests is of fundamental importance.

“This journey is not meant to be made alone,” he said, noting that many priests lack the “lifeline” represented by a “sense of belonging.”

“Weaving a strong network of fraternal relationships is a priority task of ongoing formation ... it is essential that priests feel ‘at home.’ You, as a Dicastery, have already



Pope Francis speaking with priests and seminarians of the Diocese of Rome. (Vatican Media file photo)

begun to weave a worldwide network: I urge you to do everything possible to ensure that this continues and bears fruit around the world.”

The decline in vocations to the priestly and consecrated life is “one of the great challenges for the People of God,” the Pope observed.

He added that the crisis also affects vocations to marriage. For this reason, he explained, his recent messages for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations has broadened the focus “to include all Christian vocations,” particularly the “fundamental vocation of discipleship” that unites all baptised individuals.

“We cannot resign ourselves,” the Pope warned, “to the fact that for many young people, the prospect of a radical offer of life has disappeared from the horizon. Instead, we must reflect together and remain attentive to the signs of the Spirit, and you can carry out this task through the Pontifical Work for

Priestly Vocations. I invite you to reactivate this reality with methods suited to our times.”

The Pope then addressed the third theme of the Plenary: the permanent diaconate, whose “specific identity” is often questioned today.

The Pope invited participants to contribute to the ongoing reflection on this ministry, as recommended by the Synthesis Report of the first Session of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops last October, focusing especially “on the diaconia of charity and service to the poor.”

“Accompanying these reflections and developments is a very important task of your Dicastery. I encourage you to work towards this and to mobilise all the necessary resources.”

The Pope brought his address to a close by inviting participants to work “so that the People of God might have pastors according to the heart of Christ,” accompanied by Mary, “the model of every vocation.” — *Vatican News*



## THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,  
may the faith you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ,  
our brother,  
and the flame of charity  
enkindled in our hearts  
by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed hope  
for the coming of your Kingdom.  
May your grace transform us  
into tireless cultivators of the  
seeds of the Gospel.  
May those seeds transform  
from within both humanity and  
the whole cosmos in the sure  
expectation of a new heaven  
and a new earth,  
when, with the powers of Evil  
vanquished, your glory  
will shine eternally.  
May the grace of the Jubilee  
reawaken in us,  
Pilgrims of Hope,  
a yearning for the  
treasures of heaven.  
May that same grace  
spread the joy and peace  
of our Redeemer  
throughout the earth.  
To you our God,  
eternally blessed,  
be glory and praise for ever.  
Amen



## HERALD

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## EDITOR

Patricia Pereira  
editor1@herald.com.my

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Sandra Ann Inbaraj  
sandra@herald.com.myGRAPHIC DESIGNER  
Youth SectionAmanda Mah  
amanda@herald.com.my

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Kevin Francis  
kevin@herald.com.my

## BAHASA MALAYSIA

Melania Liza Magnus  
liza@herald.com.my

## MANDARIN

Adelina Wong  
yin4482@gmail.com

## TAMIL

RK Samy  
rksamy3@hotmail.com

## ADVERTISEMENTS / SUBSCRIPTION

advertisement@herald.com.my

## MEMORIAM

memoriam@herald.com.my

## LETTERS

letterseditor@herald.com.my

## EDITOR'S NOTE

When the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) 2023 results were announced on May 27, it was discovered that approximately 10,000 Form Five Malaysian students last year chose not to sit for the SPM exam. Although this number represents a significant decrease from the 30,000 absentees in 2022, it remains a worrying indicator of shifting priorities among our youth. Education director-general Azman Adnan has promised a thorough investigation and intervention to tackle this issue, but it is clear that a deeper societal challenge is at play.

A significant factor contributing to this alarming phenomenon is the allure of becoming social media influencers. Many students harbour the mistaken belief that a career as an influencer guarantees wealth and success, thus diminishing the perceived value of education and formal qualifications. This belief is a symptom of a broader cultural shift where instant gratification and visible success are often prized over the disciplined pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

At this critical juncture, the role of educators, especially Catholic teachers, is more essential than ever. Teachers are not just conveyors of knowledge; they are mentors, role models, and guides who shape the character and future of their students. Our inspirational story this issue (Page 12) features Cikgu Shawn (*see pic above*), who, through the Teach for Malaysia programme, has been a tremendous inspiration to the students of a high-needs school in the interiors of Gerik, Perak. Shawn exemplifies the passion and dedication we need in educators today.

Pope Francis has often spoken about the transformative power of education. In his address to the Congregation for Catholic Education, he emphasised that education is an act of love and a service that brings us closer to the truth. He said, "To educate is an act of love, it is to give life." This profound statement underscores the sacred duty of teachers to

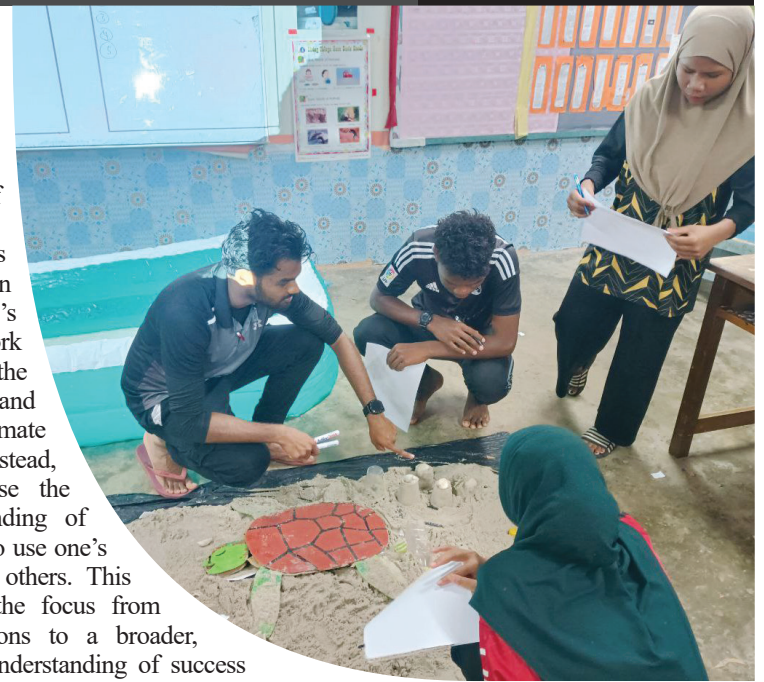
nurture not just the minds, but also the hearts and souls of their students.

Catholic teachers can draw inspiration from the Pope's teachings and work towards dispelling the myth that fame and wealth are the ultimate goals in life. Instead, they can emphasise the Christian understanding of vocation — a call to use one's gifts in service to others. This perspective shifts the focus from self-centred ambitions to a broader, more meaningful understanding of success and fulfilment.

To address the specific challenge posed by the influencer culture, teachers can incorporate discussions on media literacy and critical thinking into their curricula. Helping students understand the realities behind social media success — the hard work, the often fleeting nature of fame, and the lack of job security — can provide a more balanced view. Moreover, encouraging students to reflect on their true passions and talents, and how these can be developed and used to serve the community, can inspire a more grounded and purposeful approach to their future careers.

Parents and the wider Catholic community also play a crucial role in supporting educators. At home, parents can create environments that uphold the value of education and encourage children to pursue their studies diligently. The Church can further support these efforts through programmes and activities that celebrate academic achievements, such as the Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon Award, and promote vocational discernment among young people.

Furthermore, the integration of technology and social media into education should not be



viewed as a threat but as an opportunity. Catholic schools can harness these tools to enhance learning and engagement, showing students that technology can be used responsibly and productively. By creating content that highlights educational success stories and the positive impact of well-educated individuals in various fields, schools can counteract the glamourisation of influencer culture.

The reduction in the number of students abstaining from the SPM exams is a positive sign, but much work remains. Teachers, especially those guided by Catholic values, must rise to the challenge of guiding their students away from the superficial allure of influencer culture and towards a deeper, more fulfilling pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

Like Cikgu Shawn, by fostering environments where education is cherished and students are encouraged to discover and develop their God-given talents, we can look forward to a future where young people are not only successful but also truly fulfilled.

Patricia Pereira

## Work to grow the Kingdom of God within us

St Augustine tells us that our hearts are restless until it rests in God, but how many of us feel that way? We live in an age where we are told that the restlessness in our hearts is caused by not having enough things in our lives. Whatever social media platform we log on to, we will be continuously bombarded by advertisements telling us what we need. All we need to do is go to an online shopping platform and browse for any item and before we know it, advertisements for such products will appear in our social media feeds.

There are many who, in the pursuit of fulfilment, will do anything to find it. We hear stories of happiness gurus and the countless self-help books telling us what we already know. If all these means can help people find fulfilment, then why are there people who are still searching despite consulting all these mediums? Perhaps the answer lies in the composition of the human person.

In the secular world, the human body comprises of just the body and the mind. Both affect and complement one another so that we can function and live our lives to the best of our ability. However, the Church teaches us that we have another component, which is the soul. Of course, since the soul is not visible or measurable, its existence cannot be proved. It is only by faith that we believe in its existence. We also believe that it was God who created us in His image and likeness and He is the one who gave us our souls. Following this



line of reasoning, we are all made up of body, mind and soul and whatever happens to one affects the other.

Since the soul is given by God, deep within us there is this yearning to be united to God and this is what St Augustine meant. How many of us truly understand and listen to this yearning of our souls? Very often, we mistake this yearning to be the yearning for created things. Our bodies, which are physical, yearn for what is physical, it yearns to please our senses while our souls yearn to be with God. This constant tug-o-war causes our minds to be divided. This division causes us to be confused with what can fulfil us and make us truly joyful.

St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians tells us clearly that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord and the opposite is what we yearn for — to be

exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord. The one important note that he makes is that whatever position we take, we should be intent on pleasing the Lord and no one else. It is only when we conform ourselves fully — body, mind and soul — to that of Christ, that we can find fulfilment in our lives. We can never be completely and perfectly fulfilled or happy while on this earth because that can only be found in heaven.

While still on this earth, we can do our part in allowing the kingdom of God to grow within us. Jesus tells us two parables on how this happens and both involve the planting of seeds. When we plant seeds, we do not know how a small seed can grow into a large tree but we know that in order for it to grow, we need to nurture and provide for its growth. We water it, make sure there is enough sunlight and shade

Reflecting on our  
Sunday Readings

with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

11th Sunday in  
Ordinary Time (B)

Readings: Ezekiel 17:22-24;

2 Corinthians 5:6-10;

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

and occasionally we put manure in it.

The same applies to the kingdom of God within us. We need to ensure that our souls are properly fed so that it will grow into a beautiful tree. We nurture this seed with prayer and frequenting the Sacraments. These are the things that can fulfil the soul and if the soul is fulfilled and at peace, the body and the mind will follow suit. However, we will not feel fulfilled constantly because of the continuous battle between the body and the soul. This is why we frequent the Sacraments because it gives us the strength to face the temptations of our flesh. We are in the world but we should not live as if we belong to the world, because we truly belong to God and no one else.

We may feel that the seed of our faith is small but as Jesus pointed out, the small mustard seed can grow into the biggest tree of all. All we need to do is to nurture that seed and entrust its growth to God. On our part, all we need to do is to protect it from the attractions of this world.





## KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

### Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

#### June

- 17 Mass – ACLAC closing ceremony for Family Life Camp 2024
- 18-19 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 20 Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance
- 22 AMEIA Ecumenical
- 22 Feast – Church of St Aloysius, Mantin
- 23 Confirmation – Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, KL
- 23 Opening Mass – Alpha Transforming Parishes



## PENANG DIOCESE

### Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

#### June / July

- 18 Meeting – Council of Priests (COP) at 10.00am
- 18-19 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 20 Meeting with Head of SEEDS Ministry at 11.00am
- 22 Opening Address – Healing and Deliverance at 9.00am – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
- 22 Opening Address – Tamil Apostolate at 10.30am – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
- 25 Meeting – Catholic Health Care Asia at 3.00pm – Mt Miriam via Zoom
- 29 Mass & Celebration of 10th Anniversary of Penang Diocesan Prison Ministry at 6.00pm – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
- 30/6-5/7 Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei – Keningau, Sabah
- 1/7 Bishop Cornelius Piong's 75th Celebration – Keningau, Sabah



## MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

### Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

#### June

- 18-19 Clergy Monthly Recollection – MAJODI Centre
- 20 Meeting – MJD Young People's Network
- 22 Confirmation – Church of St Louis, Kluang



## DIOCESE OF PENANG

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Then people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebukes them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

When He had placed His hand on them, He went on from there. Mt 19: 13-15

#### 1. Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025 - Pilgrims of Hope

The Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee was officially proclaimed on Thursday, May 9 by Pope Francis, who presided over a formal reading of the Jubilee's papal bull of indiction. The papal bull, titled *Spes Non Confudit*, meaning "Hope Does Not Disappoint," declares that the Jubilee Year will officially begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve 2024. For the full text of the bull, go to: <https://11nk.dev/Jubilee> Following the solemn indiction of the Jubilee 2025 by Pope Francis on May 9, 2024, the Apostolic Penitentiary has published a decree that provides the details for the Indulgences that will be granted during the Holy Year. Go to: <https://11nk.dev/indulgence>

#### 2. Catholic Formation for Evangelisers (CSE)

This formation by the School for New Evangelisation (SNE) under the Penang Diocesan New Evangelisation Commission (PDNEC) is on August 3 and 4 at the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh, Perak. This formation is to encourage, prepare and equip Catholics to effectively witness and present the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All are welcome to register by July 20. The fee is RM20. <https://11nk.dev/Evangelise>

#### 3. Burning Bush Vocation Retreat

This stay-in retreat organised by the Penang Diocesan Vocation Team will be held from June 14 - 17 at Stella Maris, Penang.

Young people between the ages of 21 years to 35 years are most encouraged to join this programme.

#### 4. 2024 Feast of St Anne and St Joachim, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam

The novena and feast of St Anne this year will begin from July 19 and culminate on July 28. Let us pray for all pilgrims, volunteers, celebrants and confessors as we experience a meaningful and grace-filled celebration through the intercession of St Anne and St Joachim. <https://11nk.dev/StAnneBM>

#### 5. PDYN Leadership Retreat 2024

The Penang Diocesan Youth Network (PDYN) is organising a Leadership Retreat this year. The upcoming dates are August 5-8 at the Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani, Kedah and December 2-5 at the Church of St Anthony, Teluk Intan, Perak. These leadership retreats are open to all parish youth and campus students from ages 18-29 years old. For registration and more information, please go to: <https://acesse.one/PDYNleader>

#### 6. Caritas Penang Lenten 2024 Collection and 2023 Payouts

With heartfelt gratitude, I thank you for your kind efforts and generous contributions through the parish and online payment for the social mission initiatives in the Diocese of Penang. Sharing with you the information prepared by Caritas Penang on the total payouts made in 2023 and the total collection received for this year 2024. <https://11nk.dev/Lent2024>

## Notifications and Updates

#### 7. 10th Anniversary of the Penang Diocesan Prison Ministry

In thanksgiving, the Penang Diocesan Prison Ministry will celebrate their 10th Anniversary Mass at 6.00pm on June 29 at the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam. Let us remember them and their services in prayer.

#### 8. Archbishop Emeritus Tan Sri Murphy Pakiam's Diamond Jubilee celebrations



I would like to invite you to join us in celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Archbishop Emeritus Tan Sri Murphy Pakiam.

Please refer to the attached poster for further information. Let us come together to celebrate this momentous occasion and honour a remarkable servant of God.

*Sebastian Francis*

Cardinal Sebastian Francis

## Embrace service as a pathway to joy

SEREMBAN: The Church of the Visitation recently celebrated its 176th anniversary. The celebration was centred around the theme *For the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is His name*, inspired by Luke 1:49.

The feast included a variety of sub-themes that emphasised different aspects of faith and community life. A nine-day Novena preceded the grand Eucharistic celebration. The Novena featured a diverse lineup of priests from both the Archdiocese and neighbouring dioceses, adding to the spiritual experience for attendees.

Each day of the Novena focused on a

specific sub-theme, offering deeper insights into various aspects of faith and community engagement.

The Eucharistic celebration on the feast led by Fr Simon Anand, focused on the theme *Listening to the Cry of the Earth*. Fr Simon emphasised the importance of environmental stewardship as a moral imperative rooted in our faith, drawing from Pope Francis' teachings on how environmental degradation disproportionately affects the poor. Fr Simon's homily connected reflections on the blessings bestowed upon Mary and Elizabeth with insights from St Ignatius of

Loyola, emphasising the interplay between prayer and action in living out our faith.

He challenged the congregation to embrace service as a pathway to true joy and encouraged them to offer their personal struggles and sacrifices as offerings to God for the healing of others.

The celebration at the Church of the Visitation reflected a community deeply committed to living out the Gospel values of compassion, stewardship, and service. It was a powerful reminder of our sacred duty to listen to the cry of the Earth and respond with love and care for all of God's creation.

— By Sabrina Smith



Children dressed as Mother Mary during the parish feast celebration at the Church of the Visitation, Seremban. (photo/Julian Yong)



# Cardinal Sebastian opens NCSM-CARITAS facility, leads health symposium

By Christopher Kushi

IPOH: Cardinal Sebastian Francis officially inaugurated the Dewan NCSM-CARITAS at the National Cancer Society Malaysia-CARITAS Homes of Hope in Kampung Simee on June 1.

This inauguration marks a milestone as the newly established hall is now available for seminars, functions, and meetings, providing a conducive space for various community engagements.

Furthermore, housed within the facility are the 'Children's Home of Hope' and 'Adults' Home of Hope,' offering free accommodation to underprivileged child and adult cancer patients, along with their caregivers. This provision aims to alleviate the burden of accommodation costs for those undergoing treatment at Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun in Ipoh, facilitating their access to essential medical care.

The opening was held during a symposium on *Intersectionalities*

*between Health, Spirituality, and Sociology* held at the same venue.

The bishop of Penang, who delivered the keynote address, focused on the spirituality of health, highlighting St Paul's view that human beings are composed of body, soul, and spirit. Quoting 1 Thessalonians 5:23, he said, "May your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns, and may the God of Peace Himself sanctify you."

Elaborating, the cardinal said, "The *Soma* (Body) represents physical health; *Psyche* (thoughts, feelings, memories) encompasses psychology and sociology; and *Pneuma* (Holy Spirit) signifies the capacity for transcendence and divinity. The Asian holistic system of medicine emphasises universal interconnectedness and balance among mind, body, spirit, and environment, focusing on preventive strategies rather than curative ones."

The next speaker, Assoc Prof



Cardinal Sebastian Francis signing the plaque.

Dr Murallitharan M., managing director of NCSM, who spoke on *Unwrapping the Box of Health*, outlining six components of individual well-being: mental health (coping with life's stresses), physical health (maintaining a healthy quality of life), financial health (security and control), occupational health (engagement and satisfaction), community health (belonging and

social connectedness), and social health (meaningful relationships).

Deacon Paul Kang, CEO of Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital Penang, shared personal experiences of cancer patients' journeys, from initial screening and diagnosis to the continuum of oncology and palliative-hospice care. He emphasised the importance of emotional support for patients and families,

spiritual care, community support, psychosocial support, and symptom management, particularly through pastoral care and the ministry of presence.

Dr Mary Bharathy, psychiatrist and board member of Caritas Penang, discussed the *Role of Mental Health in Physical Healing*, presenting scientific evidence supporting the connection between mental health and physical recovery, and advocating for integrated mental health approaches in physical healing.

Dr Jessica Canute provided an overview of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia's services and collaboration opportunities, encouraging volunteer participation. The event concluded with a forum discussion on holistic care in the community, where panel members shared experiences and explored opportunities. This was followed by a workshop envisioning a framework for holistic care services in Malaysia.

## A delightful afternoon with the Orang Asli community

BEKOH, Johor: The Couples for Christ community (CFC) in Peninsular Malaysia, through its charity foundation ANCOP (Answering the Cry of the Poor), recently conducted an outreach to the Orang Asli settlement in Bekoh.

The village is located at the foot of Gunung Ledang, beyond the palm oil plantations. Though secluded, the village is easily accessible via paved roads. Development is evident, with running water and electricity in the community centre and some houses made of concrete.

The outreach event began with Mass in their chapel, which also serves as a multipurpose hall. Afterwards, we enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the villagers. The afternoon programme included praise and worship, skits, games, and the distribution of donations to the heads of the families. The CFC community provided household supplies for 30 families.



Fr Aaron Alammalay blessing the food.

Throughout these activities, from the songs to the games and our final activity of handprinting our memento banner, the energy of the Orang Asli community was remarkable. They sang wholeheartedly and performed the actions of the songs with enthusiasm, and they played the games excitedly, regardless of the simple prizes.

The women I spoke with were

grateful for the religious items they received to decorate their homes. Despite their material shortages and the challenges they face, such as caring for their adult children with autism, their sense of joy and gratitude reflected their strong faith in God. They reminded us, as Catholics, to give thanks to Him in all circumstances. — *By Michelle T. Anderson*

## Great camaraderie at migrant futsal match

KUALA LUMPUR: The MIKS Refugee School hosted its annual Peace Futsal World Cup on May 25, with matches running from 9.30am to 3.30pm. The Phoenix team from the migrant ministry of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Jalan Peel participated in the Boys U12 category. Out of six teams, Phoenix proudly clinched the second prize.

Participating in the Peace World

Cup was a significant opportunity for the Phoenix team, underscoring the balance between education and physical health — echoing the adage, "Health is wealth." The tournament was not only a source of fun and laughter for the students but also a valuable lesson in teamwork and sportsmanship. The matches were both exciting and entertaining, greatly enjoyed by all participants. — *By Lydia Luisa Pinto*



One of the teams at the Peace Futsal World Cup competition.

## SIC organises First Aid at Workplace certification course

PETALING JAYA: In response to the escalating rates of cardiovascular diseases in both local and global communities, the Church of St Ignatius has taken proactive steps to address this health crisis. Recognising the devastating impact of heart-related ailments on families, the church organised the First Aid at Workplace (FAW) certification course to empower parishioners with life-saving skills.

Led by experienced trainers from St John's Ambulance Malaysia, the comprehensive two-day course covered theoretical knowledge and practical application of first aid techniques. Participants were taken through a wide range of health and safety topics, including CPR for cardiac arrest, treatment for strains and sprains, managing fainting episodes, and addressing

bone fractures.

The course, held on May 1 and May 4, attracted 42 enthusiastic participants eager to enhance their emergency response capabilities. With the support and encouragement of parish priest Fr Lawrence Ng, CDD, it is hoped that certified individuals will actively serve their communities and parish.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty for grant-

ing us the opportunity to host this workshop, to the dedicated members of the SIC Medical Emergency Response Team for mobilising themselves into planning and organising all the behind-the-scenes work, and to the volunteers from St John's Ambulance Malaysia for generously sharing their time and expertise in imparting invaluable life-saving knowledge and skills.



Participants learning how to administer CPR.



# Corpus Christi celebrations

## KL South District

KAJANG: The Kuala Lumpur South District parishes celebrated the Feast of *Corpus Christi* with Mass and Eucharistic procession on Saturday, June 1. The South District parishes are the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St Francis of Assisi and the Church of the Holy Family, which hosted the celebration.

The skies opened up late afternoon with a heavy downpour but it did not deter more than a thousand faithful from gathering at the Church of the Holy Family to express their unity in faith, they included delegates from the Chinese language Legion of Mary members from Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Taiwan who were in Kajang for a four-day retreat. The evening's celebration started with a Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, an apt devotion as the month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam, parish priest of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, presided over Mass and welcomed parishioners, visitors and guests to the first south district Corpus Christi celebration. He reminded the congregation that the Feast of Corpus Christi was also a celebration of the summit of our faith and life in the Eucharist. The Mass was concelebrated by the priests of the parishes; Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap of St Francis of Assisi and the priests of Holy Family Kajang, Fr Michael Chua, Fr Philip Chua and Fr Bonaventure Rayappan, the lat-



The 2km procession round Kajang town.

ter also being the senator of the district.

The readings were proclaimed in Tamil and Mandarin and the responsorial psalm was chanted in Bahasa. Fr Michael read the Gospel and delivered the sermon in English and Bahasa, Fr Bonaventure delivered the sermon in Tamil while Fr Philip delivered the sermon in Mandarin.

The sermons focused on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, which emphasises biblical concepts of sacrifice and covenant. Fr Michael preached that sacrifice involves an internal offering to God, shown through an external sign, reflecting true commitment, which signifies the importance of the solemn procession for the feast.

"In Jewish tradition, blood sacrifices atoned for sins, acknowledging human sinfulness. However, animal sacrifices were insufficient, pointing to the need

for Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. His death, described in Hebrews, purifies us more effectively than animal sacrifices, fulfilling Old Testament covenants.

The Eucharist symbolises the new covenant, demanding full adherence to Christ's teachings. This challenges "cafeteria Catholics" who selectively follow Church doctrines. True faith requires complete observance of Church teachings and sacraments, embracing the full spiritual nourishment offered by Christ."

Following the concluding rites and with the rain stopping, churchgoers were swiftly guided by the hospitality ministers towards the entrance of the church where the 2km *Corpus Christi* procession commenced. The solemn procession was led by altar servers ringing the altar bells, followed by the monstrance, placed on a float. Against the cool and relative quiet

of the night, the procession was held in silent prayer and Kajang town was momentarily bathed in a sea of candle light. At each benediction point, the crowd knelt while flower girls scattered flower petals at the Eucharist.

Upon returning to church, the procession ended with the adoration to the Blessed Sacrament and singing of the Divine Praises. With the official program for the day ended, the congregation was treated to light refreshments and community fellowship.

Fr Bonaventure, on behalf of the priests, expressed their gratitude for the coordination, untiring dedication and sacrifices by the organising committee and volunteers from all three parishes, in making this first district level *Corpus Christi* celebration a reverent and memorable celebration which deepens and intensifies love for the Eucharist.

## KL Central District

KUALA LUMPUR: *United in Christ* (Eph 4:4-6) was the theme of the *Corpus Christi* celebration organised by the parishes in the KL Central district.

From 8.00am - 6.00pm on June 2, Masses in English, Tamil, BM, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Myanmar were celebrated at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist. The celebration was animated by the four parishes — Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Church of the Holy Rosary, Church of St Anthony and the Cathedral.

Parishioners from the district were encouraged to join in the celebration held at the Cathedral. There was only one Mass in the morning held at the other three parishes to cater for those unable to participate in the celebration at the cathedral.



Archbishop Julian Leow with the priests of the KL Central district.

### Church of Our Lady of Good Health, Parit Buntar



### Church of St Peter, Melaka



### Church of St Peter, Kampong Simpok, Kuching



### Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Ipoh



### Church of the Holy Rosary Limbahau, Papar





# Kepong church reflects on passion, intimacy, joyful witnessing

By Malcolm Francis Solomon

KEPONG: The Church of Jesus Caritas commenced its feast day celebration on May 30, culminating with the Eucharistic celebration and procession on June 1.

Day 1 of the triduum featured an insightful reflection by Fr Gerard Theraviam on what it means to be a passionate follower of Jesus. He explained that “passion,” derived from the Greek word *pathos*, signifies suffering rather than mere energy. To be passionate is to yearn and long for God, as illustrated in Psalm 84. This longing is not a solitary endeavour but is sustained within a community. Like charcoal that burns longer when kept together, our faith thrives on communal support. Additionally, self-discipline in maintaining a relationship with God through prayer is crucial. St Teresa of Avila likened prayer to an intimate sharing between friends, emphasising the importance of regular, heartfelt communication with God.



The clergy during Mass on the first day of the feast.

On the second day, the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fr Michael Chua preached on the theme *Being Intimate Friends of Jesus*. Fr Michael explained how St John Paul II profoundly connected Mary’s role with the Eucharist, noting that Mary’s acceptance of God’s Word made her the first tabernacle. Mary’s

fiat, her “yes,” allowed the Word to become flesh. This teaches us the depth of intimacy we can achieve through the Eucharist. As we receive Holy Communion, we participate in a profound union with God, akin to the intimate bond between Mary and Jesus. This act of communion calls us to recognise and declare, “My Lord and my God,” going

beyond appearances to embrace faithfully. Archbishop Julian Leow, the main presider on the third day, focused on being joyful witnesses for Jesus by acknowledging our imperfections. Despite being little, broken, and frail, we find strength through Christ. Our journey to becoming closer to God involves receiving Him and striving to emulate His love and grace. Importantly, the responsibility of attracting others to the Church lies with us; when people turn away, it often reflects our shortcomings.

The day culminated with a 3.5-kilometre Eucharistic procession around Kepong, symbolising our collective journey in faith and witness.

During its triduum, the parish also launched its prayer towards the Golden Jubilee celebrations, coinciding with the Church’s Jubilee year. The parish hopes to deepen its faith and hope in Jesus Christ so that we may be disciples of the Lord, with saving souls as our priority.

## City Parish celebrates *Flores de Mayo* feast honouring Mary

GEORGE TOWN: The sweltering heat did not dampen the spirits of the Filipino Catholics as they celebrated a historic and cultural tradition honouring Mother Mary via the *Flores de Mayo* feast day on May 26.

*Flores de Mayo*, which translates as “Flowers of May”, is commonly celebrated in the Philippines during the month of May as a Marian devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church of Our Lady of Sorrows (City Parish) played host to more than 300 parishioners who turned up for this

joyous occasion.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr Desmond Jansen (assistant parish priest) with Friar Esmond Chua OFM and Fr Rey from the Philippines as concelebrants.

In his homily, Fr Desmond reflected on the Holy Trinity and urged the parishioners to embrace and accept the Trinitarian God’s presence in our lives.

“We have the Father, who loves us as His children, who sent us His Son as a gift to redeem us, and gave us the Spirit as a guidance in our lives,” he said.

After Mass, a procession with the statue of Our Lady took place within the church grounds, together with the ritual pageant known as Santacruzán, which depicts the finding of the True Cross by Reyna Elena, which is the title for Queen Helena of Constantinople.

It was a vibrant and colourful display of faith and devotion as parishioners dressed in costumes portraying the different depictions of Our Lady and several biblical characters.

Grace Aberin shared that she was blessed to be able to join the procession as Reyna Banderada, dressed in a red gown carrying a yellow flag which represented the origins of

Christianity in the Philippines.

“It was a powerful experience to be able to bring something from home to a foreign land here in Penang and share it with those who have not heard of this celebration,” she said.

For Adel Magsino Panganiban, who represented the Reyna Pastora or the Virgin Mary and child Jesus, she was touched by the rich traditions of the event and the enthusiasm of the Filipino community in making it a reality.

“The Santacruzán experience outdoors was an unforgettable moment and we hope to be able to celebrate it here every year,” she said. — *By Aaron Lim*



Parishioners dressed in costumes portraying the different depictions of Our Lady and several biblical characters in the procession.

## Sentul parishioners rejoice at newly renovated grotto

SENTUL: The Church of St Joseph celebrated the conclusion of the Marian month and the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 31 at the parish’s newly renovated grotto. This event fostered a renewed sense of devotion that touched the hearts of all who attended.

The celebration commenced at 7.00pm with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament by Msgr James Gnanapiragasam, followed by Mass at 8.00pm concelebrated by Msgr James and parish priest, Fr Frederick Joseph. Nearly 350 faithful attended the solemn event.

After Mass, the beautifully decorated statue of Mama Mary and the renovated grotto area was solemnly blessed by Fr Frederick. A candlelight procession took place around the church compound as the congregation recited the Rosary. The journey symbolised the

faithful’s desire to seek solace and guidance from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Upon returning to the grotto, the statue of Mama Mary was installed at the grotto, signifying her enduring presence and protection in the lives of the parishioners. This experience provided an opportunity for the faithful to reflect on the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, finding inspiration in her profound faith and devotion.

In a display of communal unity, a potluck dinner took place in the church courtyard. Parishioners contributed a variety of dishes, sharing and fostering a spirit of togetherness. This joyful gathering further reinforced the strong bonds among the Church community, emphasising the importance of fellowship, compassion, and the shared celebration of faith. — *By J. Bosco Morais*



Parishioners in front of the renovated grotto.

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# Inaugural Parish Renewal Experience at CDM Penang

By Sharon Chandra

PENANG: The successful completion of PRE1 at the Church of the Divine Mercy was a dream come true for many parishioners, and especially for parish priest Fr Michael Raymond, OFM Cap. During the closing Eucharistic celebration, he shared that he had long desired to bring the Parish Renewal Experience (PRE) to the Sg Ara parish since he became parish priest three years ago.

The PRE, or Parish Renewal Experience, began in the early 1970s when Fr Charles Gallagher, SJ, gathered a group of priests and laypeople to reflect on Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

In the encyclical the pope states that the Church is an evangeliser, but she begins by being evangelised herself through constant conversion and renewal, in order to evangelise the world with credibility.

The PRE concept centres on a conversion experience, involving a rediscovery of faith and a renewed sense of belonging to the Church. This experiential programme aims to help Catholics find meaning in their faith life, reconnect, and deepen their relationship with God, family, and fellow Catholics.

The non-stay-in weekend guided participants towards realising that the parish is not a 'we' and 'they' arrangement, but a family living with and loving one another in commitment as the Mystical Body of



Smiles all around as parishioners give thanks at the end of the PRE1 weekend.

Christ. Unlike typical formation sessions where participants listen and "learn" about the faith, this program fosters active interaction through small group settings, discussion, and exploration of one's faith journey.

Around 40 participants, primarily ministry leaders and core group members, gathered from Friday evening to Sunday evening for a time of renewal and conversion. The group, which included youth, young adults, and senior leaders, shared a sense of camaraderie and family, bringing everyone together in a spirit of unity.

To centre the focus on the parish, all other activities and meetings were cancelled for the three days, allowing the weekend's setup, support, and ongoing prayer initiatives to be handled by the parishioners themselves, demonstrating strong communal support.

Sachin Christian, a 29-year-old core

group member of the Young Adults ministry, felt that the PRE was "the perfect way to bridge the gap between parishioners. We humanise each other through our sharing. It's crucial for young people to make their voices heard... to represent our generation, share, educate, and expose others to the challenges and the current realities faced by our generation in the church."

The sessions, led by Fr Simon Labrooy and his team from Kuala Lumpur, culminated in a Eucharistic celebration on Sunday evening that included all participants and their family members.

Everyone left with a sense of gratitude for a weekend that was both enriching and growth-promoting in various aspects of their faith lives. A common theme was the chance to delve deeper into their spirituality and recognise the need for further growth. The parish plans to host two more

PRE sessions for parishioners in August and late November this year. Described as "moving," "beneficial," "enlightening," "promoting openness," and "empowering" among other accolades, the smiles and joy evident at the end of the three days were truly uplifting.

Julie Chen, a long-time catechist and core group member of her BEC, reflected, "It was a wake-up call for me — to be transformed. It's not just about praying for grace and strength from God... it's about committing to make the necessary changes to do His will."

Sachin encapsulated the importance of the PRE, saying, "I recommend it because of its holistic approach to being part of this Parish. It's about serving one another, learning to listen, and being given the opportunity to express your views on what it means to be Catholic in our parish."

## Enriching pilgrimage to century-old chapel

JELEBU, Negeri Sembilan: On the recent May 22 public holiday, parishioners of the Church of St Francis of Assisi (SFA) embarked on a pilgrimage to the Chapel of St Augustine in Titi. The trip, organised by SFA's Silver Liners Ministry, was accompanied by parish priest Fr Paul Cheong, OFM Cap, and Fr Michael Teng, OFM Cap.

Fr Philip Tay, OCD, the chapel's administrator, and some representatives from Visitation Parish, warmly welcomed the 88 pilgrims. In his introduction, Fr Philip recounted the history of the chapel, built in 1905 in a predominantly agricultural area with a community primarily composed of Hakka Chinese. Despite leading simple lives, this community has endured, although church attendance has dwindled, with most attendees now being elderly. Remarkably, this community has produced both a priest

and a nun, a strong testament to their faith.

After the briefing, everyone prepared for Mass, which was celebrated by Fr Philip, with Frs Paul and Michael concelebrating. Following the Mass, the pilgrims explored the chapel, examining its unique features and taking numerous photos. They then enjoyed lunch at a local restaurant, renowned for its Hakka cuisine, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Several participants were first-time pilgrims and appreciated that the trip was scheduled on a public holiday. Many others were regulars who consistently joined the Silver Liners' pilgrimages. The visit to this remote chapel in Negeri Sembilan left many feeling blessed. All unanimously agreed that they had a wonderful time and looked forward to future pilgrimages. — *By Marian Chua*



The pilgrims pose for a group photo in the church.



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# Jews, Christians, Muslims unite in interfaith march

JERUSALEM: “Look around you and say ‘shalom’ (‘peace’, or the equivalent of our ‘hello’ in Hebrew) to people you don’t know,” said Fr Piotr Zelensky, vicar of the Latin Patriarchate, to the 300 or so people gathered in Jerusalem’s Zion Square, watching the crowd wave with smiling faces. “We are now united by peace,” he says as he launches into an “Our Father” in Hebrew, before a Druze sheikh continues with a prayer in Arabic.

People stop. They try to figure out what’s going on as priests, rabbis and Muslim sheikhs grab each other by the arm to launch their march for human rights and peace on Jaffa Street, the main boulevard in West Jerusalem. Some Israelis pull out their smartphones and film the scene. Interreligious events, which are seldom seen in the public arena in general, are rare in these times of war.

This is the second iteration of the interfaith march, launched by the Israeli NGO “Rabbis for Human Rights” (RDH). The first was held at the beginning of May 2023, a few days after rockets were exchanged between the Islamic Jihad of Gaza and Israel.

“This year, the war has entered a new dimension, and it’s more important than ever to show our support for justice, human rights



Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, Jerusalem (Wikimedia Commons/Ralf Roletschek)

and unity in the face of adversity,” explained Avi Dabush, Executive Director of RDH and a survivor of the October 7 attack in his *kibbutz* of Nirim, next to Gaza. Shaken, he has never wavered from his pro-peace stance. “Today, people are afraid to stand up for these ideas,” he lamented.

Despite the unfavourable context, the march brought together twice as many people as last year. The event attracted much attention among activist groups from what

remains of the Israeli left. They formed most of the procession, joined by a few Muslims and Christians. “I take part as much as possible in this kind of initiative, especially when it brings Israelis and Palestinians together. I need to do something. It’s my only therapy against the decisions of this fascist government”, explained Michal, who came from Rehovot for the occasion, alone: “My friends don’t understand. We don’t think alike.”

Of course, this kind of event is aimed at

people who are already convinced,” said Karine Ekblom, a Swedish Lutheran pastor. “But you have to see the glass as half full: it’s better than nothing, given the current situation.” A small security cordon is maintained by RDH volunteers. It’s also a way of providing a buffer in the event of altercations. Insults and vulgar gestures abound along the way.

The procession weaves in and out of the streetcars, driven by songs of peace. At the Jaffa gate, a small group of Palestinians awaits them. “The evil has been so great for the past eight months. Anything that brings a little positivity is welcome. We must break the circle of violence and silence, take courage and defend the humanity of both peoples,” said Omar Harami, a Palestinian Christian and director of the Sabeel Institute, which promotes liberation theology.

The young members of an Israeli-Palestinian choir brought the event to a close with songs in Arabic, Hebrew and English. Fr Piotr Zelensky gestured to the attentive crowd. “This is a sign of hope! I’ve seen friends that the war had kept away from me. And I leave saying to myself that strength lies in unity.” — **By Cécile Lemoine, LCI** (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

## Catholic leaders urge faithful to vote in Britain’s July 4 elections

LEICESTER, United Kingdom: Catholics in Britain are being called to be “willing to get involved and vote” when general elections are held for Parliament on July 4.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, issued a video saying the opportunity to vote in a general election is a “privilege.”

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the election, May 22, with his Conservative Party looking like it will fall to the Labour Party after being in power for 14 years.

In a statement released after the prime minister’s announcement, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales said during the six-week election season, Catholics will be “seeking answers which will help the poor, the marginalised, and the vulnerable.”

While admitting Christians can have a different way of looking at politics, the bishops listed several major areas people should be looking at before they vote.

The Bishops’ Conference issued a statement listing several elements voters should be

looking at before they cast their ballot: Criminal Justice; domestic poverty, family life and taxation; education; environment; international relations, human rights and peacebuilding; life issues; and migration.

In his statement, Nichols said voters want to know what their candidates will think and say on their behalf when they get into Parliament.

“I would like to put forward a theme for us all to think about. How do we seek to construct a society in which families can flourish? That’s the bedrock – many positive things flow from that,” the cardinal said.

“I ask you to look at these resources, explore them, become a bit more familiar with them so that when it comes to July 4, you’ve got in your mind what you want to see the next government strive to achieve,” he continued.

“My view is that our next government should strive to create the circumstances in which families can flourish. So please get ready to vote on July 4,” Nichols said. — **By Charles Collins, *Cruz***

## Syro Malabar Church to convene Synod to solve liturgy row



The bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church with Pope Francis at the Vatican in early May. (Vatican Media)

KERALA, India: Major Archbishop Raphael Thattil, leader of the Eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church, has called for an extraordinary synod of bishops to resolve a long-standing liturgical dispute within the Church. In a communication dated June 3, Thattil announced a special virtual meeting of the Synod, the Church’s highest decision-making body, scheduled for June 14.

The two-hour online session aims to address the contentious issue of liturgical practices, which has divided the Church’s clergy and laity in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese. The dispute centres on the synod-approved rubric for Mass, which mandates that priests face the altar during the Eucharist prayer. A significant number of priests and laypeople prefer the traditional practice of priests facing the congregation.

The Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, home to nearly 10 percent of the Church’s 5 million followers, has been the epicentre of this conflict. The outcome of this synod could shape the future of the Syro-Malabar Church, one of the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome.

In early May, a delegation of lay leaders from the archdiocese sought Pope Francis’ intervention during a visit to the Vatican, requesting permission to maintain their traditional Mass practices. Subsequently, bishops from the Permanent Synod and the archdiocese’s apostolic

administrator also met with the Pope to discuss the issue. According to a church source, Pope Francis expressed a desire for an amicable resolution without coercion.

Opponents of the synod-approved Mass demand that the Synod either withdraw its decision or grant their version of the Mass “liturgy variant” status, allowing its continued practice. Despite these appeals, the Synod has remained firm on implementing the approved liturgy.

Rumours suggest that the Synod may take disciplinary action against protesting priests and warn lay leaders of potential excommunication. “Our position is very clear. Let the Synod take action against one priest or all the priests; we will not dilute our demand for traditional Mass as priests and the laity are together in this emotive issue,” said Riju Kanjookaran, spokesperson for the Archdiocesan Movement for Transparency (AMT), a group leading the protests against the synod-approved Mass.

A priest, speaking anonymously, warned that any disciplinary measures would only exacerbate the crisis. “When the faithful will not allow a priest to celebrate the Synod-approved Mass, whatever disciplinary action the Synod contemplates will not help solve the dispute. It will only aggravate the crisis further,” he said.

Sources indicate that the priests and lay leaders are preparing the congregation for the worst, should the Synod reject their demands. — **Agencies**

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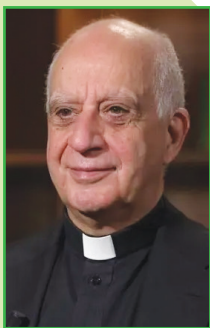




# Pilgrims of hope amid crisis

## JUBILEE 2025 GENERAL CALENDAR

**With 32 million visitors expected for the Jubilee Year, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the pro-prefect for the Section of New Evangelisation of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, discusses preparations, his hopes for conversion, and why 'we are all pilgrims of hope' in an interview with EWTN's Rome bureau chief, Andreas Thonhauser.**



**Thonhauser:** Your Excellency, you are responsible for preparing and organising Jubilee 2025. How are things progressing?  
**Fisichella:** Things are going well. We have a few weeks to wait for the first official event of the jubilee, but I should say that the preparation is at a good stage. It's complicated because I would like for more people to be engaged, that it not be just something coming from the dicastery since the jubilee is a popular event, something of the people. It is our people who love to have a spiritual experience like this. For this reason, my desire is to have people of different associations, movements, parishes, priests, bishops, laypeople all engaged in the preparation.

**There are more than 700 people involved for this jubilee working with you. It is a pretty important yearlong event, also for the city of Rome.**

Yes, you don't have to tell me that, because this is a very involved moment. I can say that almost every day, I contact the Italian government and the city of Rome. That is important because we are expecting about 32 million pilgrims in Rome. And then, first of all, you should be able to give the possibility of a welcome in the city guaranteeing security.

We know that this is a special moment throughout the world, but Rome is perceived as a safe city because it really is a very complex machine that is able, in the organisation, to provide a safe city. And then with transportation, this is a big problem for the city of Rome. We are studying the best way to facilitate transportation from one side of the city to the other. Then health, the assurance for health. There are so many things when you think about the welcome of pilgrims for an entire year. Just imagining how the organisation can be makes you more or less crazy.

**Our new estimates also show how many pilgrims will come for the whole year.**

This is not my study, so when the Italian government asked me how many people would be able to come for the jubilee, I was not able to answer. It was also, for me, a question without an answer. I asked the faculty of sociology in the city of Rome to prepare a projection of how many people we should expect.

They said 32 million. Also from the US, we are expecting about 2.5 million people to come for the jubilee.

**Some media commentators said early on that Rome might not be prepared. There is fear that it's not a good experience if people come here. Why would you encourage people to come to Rome in person?**

No, I absolutely disagree with this comment. Rome will be ready and will also be a safe city. That is for sure. As the one responsible for the Holy See in this regard and as the one responsible for participating in all the meetings with the government and the city of Rome, I can assure you that from the beginning of the jubilee, and throughout the Holy Year, the city will be ready to give the best welcome to everybody.

**You have often repeated that we are all "pilgrims of hope." That's also the motto of the jubilee year. Could you explain that a little bit more? Why is "la speranza" (hope) so important, especially today?**

I think that Pope Francis has a really good insight into this. In two words, you can put a matter that is very important for everybody, not just believers: "pilgrims" and "hope." Pilgrim, because this is the symbol of our life. We are walking, and from the beginning to our end, it is a walk. We should understand how and where we are going because the pilgrim knows where he is going. Otherwise, it's not a pilgrimage; it's something else. He's someone walking on the street, but he's not a pilgrim. To be a pilgrim, you should walk and you should know the goal of your walk.

And, then, hope. People today need hope. We are used to speaking about faith and charity. In our catechesis and our homilies, our proclamation is essentially about faith and charity. And we forget hope. And this is really a risk for evangelisation.

### DECEMBER 2024

**24 December**  
Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica



### JANUARY 2025

**24-26 January**  
Jubilee of the World of Communications

### FEBRUARY 2025

**8-9 February**  
Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

**16-18 February**  
Jubilee of Artists

**21-23 February**  
Jubilee of Deacons

### MARCH 2025

**8-9 March**  
Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

**28 March**  
24 Hours for the Lord

**28-30 March**  
Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

### APRIL 2025

**5-6 April**  
Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

**25-27 April**  
Jubilee of Teenagers

**28-30 April**  
Jubilee of People with Disabilities

### MAY 2025

**1-4 May**  
Jubilee of Workers

**4-5 May**  
Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

**10-11 May**  
Jubilee of Musical Bands

**16-18 May**  
Jubilee of Confraternities

**24-25 May**  
Jubilee of Children

**30 May - 1 June**  
Jubilee of Families, Grandparents and the Elderly

### JUNE 2025

**7-8 June**  
Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

**9 June**  
Jubilee of the Holy See

**14-15 June**  
Jubilee of Sport

**20-22 June**  
Jubilee of Governments

**23-24 June**  
Jubilee of Seminarians

**25 June**  
Jubilee of Bishops

**25-27 June**  
Jubilee of Priests

**28 June**  
Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

### JULY 2025

**28 July - 3 August**  
Jubilee of Youth

### SEPTEMBER 2025

**15 September**  
Jubilee of Consolation

**20 September**  
Jubilee of Justice

**26-28 September**  
Jubilee of Catechists

### OCTOBER 2025

**5 October**  
Jubilee of Migrants

**8-9 October**  
Jubilee of Consecrated Life

**11-12 October**  
Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

**18-19 October**  
Jubilee of the Missions

**30 October - 2 November**  
Jubilee of the World of Education



### NOVEMBER 2025

**16 November**  
Jubilee of the Poor

**22-23 November**  
Jubilee of Choirs

### DECEMBER 2025

**14 December**  
Jubilee of Prisoners

There is a very interesting story written in the last century by a French author, Charles Péguy. And Charles Péguy wrote about the two major sisters: faith and charity.

It seems that people, Christians, are just looking at faith and charity. They don't observe that there is another child, the third sister who is hidden, because no one is looking for her. She's the most important because she takes the hand of faith and charity and allows us to go to God. I think that a reflection on hope is very important, because we have many questions we are unable to answer if we don't have hope.

For instance, there is life after this one. What does eternal life mean, if we don't hope? I think we also do not have enough love to explain our faith. The challenge today for me is to speak about faith, to announce the content of faith, but with the language of hope.

**You have often said that the Jubilee is, first and foremost, a spiritual event.**

It's not only a spiritual event, but first and foremost, it is a spiritual event. In a period like ours where technology enters forcefully in our life, even if we don't want it: when you need to call someone, when you open the door.

Everything in our life is determined by technology, everything.

When there is such a strong presence of technology, everybody needs to have a different experience: an experience of humanity, an experience of brotherhood, an experience of spirituality. To enter inside the deepest parts of yourself and to understand who you are and where you are going. The answer comes only if you have a deep spiritual experience, and this means an experience of conversion.

The jubilee is conversion. The most important thing in the jubilee we cannot forget is one word: indulgence. Indulgence is a very strange word we don't use anymore, but it is the most important. From the beginning, already in the sixth and seventh centuries, mercy, pardon, and indulgence were the same; they were synonymous. For this reason, when the Holy Father opens the Holy Door and gives the jubilee indulgence to our people, it means that this is a spiritual experience of mercy, of pardon.

But it needs your conversion, recognising that you are a sinner and that you have the possibility to come closer to God, nearer to God, and to understand how His love is so great that it can forget everything of your past life.

**We're in the middle of a year of prayer in preparation for the jubilee. Pope Francis has called for this as well, and there are books written to help with that. There are eight books in Italian, and some are also translated in other languages, by renowned authors such as Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, Fr Gerard Murray. How important is that also, this preparation for the jubilee in prayer?**

Since the jubilee is a spiritual experience, we need to find a coherent method in order to prepare for it. What other method is there than prayer? For this reason, the Holy Father, in January, officially opened this year of preparation as a year of prayer.

You mentioned some books. These are just instruments, but they are written in very simple language so that everybody might understand them, whether priest, bishop, catechist; they are for everybody. But they are just instruments. We need to once again understand

## What is needed is prayer

what prayer is and how we can pray.

Usually, we think that prayer is participating in the holy Eucharist on Sunday, and this is true, but this is the summit of your prayer because it is with the community. There is also your personal prayer; there is your capacity to understand that in every moment of your life, in every moment of your day, you can be in the presence of the Lord.

This is the most important thing: To pray is to recognise that you are in the presence of God. And in each moment, God is beside you. He's inside you. He's right there in front of you. You should not have any problems; you should not be afraid to understand how beautiful a moment of silence is for you, for your life. A moment in which you listen to the voice of God speaking to you; and this is prayer. It's not just that we multiply our words to God.

He knows already what we need, but it is to listen to His voice, to listen to His Word, and to perceive that we are in His presence.

**Another side of the preparations for the jubilee are also cultural events. And I think you personally organised wonderful works of art to be presented in Rome; there's also a film festival and other initiatives. Why is culture an important aspect as well?**

As a spiritual event, spirituality is not just prayer; spirituality is also an experience of the contemplation of beauty. This is very important for me. The way of beauty is one of the privileged ways to announce the Gospel today. I am convinced that this is possible even through the beauty of a concert or the beauty of an exhibition. Contemplation of this beauty becomes a spiritual experience.



# Theologians from around the world gather to prepare the next stage

ROME: A group of approximately 20 theologians gathered in Rome for a crucial 10-day closed-door session to prepare the guiding document for the upcoming Synod on Synodality. This gathering, held from June 4 to 13 at the Jesuit General Curia, aims to pave the way for the second session of the Synod, scheduled for October.



The 16th General Congregation during the Synod of Bishops, Vatican City, October 23, 2023. (Vatican Media)

The meeting marks a significant phase in the ongoing Synod on Synodality, which began in October 2021. This multiyear process has involved stages of discernment and discussion across various levels of the Church. The first session of the Vatican assembly took place in October 2023.

The theologians, experts in theology, ecclesiology, and canon law, are tasked with carrying out an initial analysis of reports from local communities. They are focusing on discerning questions and theological reflections that have emerged from these reports. This work will inform the drafting of the *Instrumentum Laboris 2*, the working document for the next Synod assembly.

Fr Giacomo Costa, SJ, special secretary for the Synod on Synodality, highlighted that this initial text aims to “prepare the way” for the October assembly. The group is examining new reports from local Churches and reflecting on the 41-page

Synthesis Report from the October 2023 gathering. Additionally, they are considering the question, “How to be a synodal Church in mission.”

The June meeting includes inputs from women’s religious orders, university faculties, religious associations, and reports from a recent listening session with 300 parish priests held near Rome. Cardinal Mario Grech, synod secretary general, emphasised the importance of these diverse contributions, noting that they offer real testimonies on how local Churches understand and practice synodality. “We are not leaving anything to chance,” the cardinal said, stressing the careful reading and consideration of each document.

Pope Francis requested the participation of these theologians to prepare the next steps of the Synod. In addition to the 20 theologians present in Rome, five groups established in mid-March have submitted their reflections on the governance of the Church. These groups focused on various aspects, including the missionary role of the local church, the status of episcopal conferences, the role of the Curia, ecumenism, and the Eastern Churches.

Simultaneously, Pope Francis initiated 10 additional working groups to address topics discussed during the 2023 Assembly but not prioritised for 2024. These topics include “listening to the cry of the poor,” “mission in the digital environment,”

and “theological and canonical matters regarding specific ministerial forms.” These groups will report their progress in October, with a final submission due by June 2025. A senior official described this initiative as a gift from Pope Francis to his successor, allowing the next pope to continue these essential debates.

The theologians’ gathering began with a half-day spiritual retreat and includes daily Mass and time for personal prayer, fostering a reflective and focused environment for their important work. The Secretariat of the Synod expects to release a document on this meeting in early July, setting the stage for the upcoming October assembly. — *Agencies*

## Global evangelisation and personal spiritual experience

• Continued from Page 9

**Together with media outlets and EWTN, you are preparing the Jubilee of the World of Communications, which will be at the beginning of the year in January. From a perspective of evangelisation, what role does the media play today?** Media is important for communication.

I continue to be convinced that the most important communication is a personal communication. We need to look one another in the eye, and that is the best way of communicating. But we also need to understand how the world is today, communication is coming from technology, from the internet, from television, from everything.

How can we express a spiritual event if, first of all, we who are called to communicate do not have a personal, spiritual experience? For this reason, we wanted to dedicate, at the beginning of the jubilee, a moment for the world of communications, so that the men and women of the vast world of communications can personally have a spiritual experience of what a jubilee means.

Then, from that experience, they will be able to communicate and give others a coherent and profound sense of this experience.

**What are your personal hopes for the jubilee? What will be a successful jubilee for you?**

Independent of my desire, I think the jubilee has a goal to reach, that is, to give an experience of the mercy and love of God. I hope that all pilgrims coming to Rome or celebrating the jubilee in their own local Churches can have this kind of experience: God loves me. Because this is the heart of the Gospel.

This is the Gospel! The Gospel is not a book; the Gospel is the person of Jesus Christ, revealing to you the love of God. Nothing else. Everything within the Church should be this experience. The jubilee is an extraordinary moment because we have a jubilee every 25 years. If a jubilee will be able to challenge us to understand more and more that we are in the presence of God who loves us and never abandons us, even in those moments in which we are suffering, or lacking something, or when we feel alone, God never, never abandons us.

**You recently visited the Philippines. Can you tell us a little bit more about the new evangelisation and the role Asia plays for the Church?**

Asia is like a spring, because if you look to Korea, every year, there are thousands of baptisms of all those people coming to the



Saint Peter's Basilica is one of the pilgrimage destination.

Catholic Church. If you look to the Philippines, they have a very strong Catholic-Christian tradition; it's their soul. It's emotional to see how people are present in the Church.

They are proud of their own faith, and then they share it with everybody. This is the way of evangelisation. If you look to our Western countries, in our own countries, in Europe, the USA, Canada, and also in Latin America, we can say that there is a big crisis of faith.

We can touch this reality every day. There are also beautiful experiences and positive

experiences, but we cannot look away when there is something that isn't working, like a crisis of faith. Our churches aren't empty, but they aren't full.

We have several difficulties. We can see how the kingdom of God is not just the West, the kingdom of God is around the world. Looking to Africa, looking to Asia, we can see the enthusiasm of the new generation growing in faith and enthusiastic in sharing the faith, resulting in new baptisms. This gives us concrete hope, a sign of hope. — *NCRRegister*





# Catechesis for persons with Special Needs

In last month's article, I shared my thoughts about the Catechesis for Learners with Special Needs. I also explained the importance of the community's role in always being ready to welcome and accept differently abled persons in its midst. In this article, I wish to continue the discussion by examining the Church's understanding of catechesis in relation to persons with Special Needs.

## Deepening my awareness

Although I hold a Doctorate in Theology and specialise in the field of Catechetics, I have to admit that my knowledge and expertise in the area of Catechesis for Learners with Special Needs is lacking. In fact, there was no course on this subject throughout my entire studies in Rome, whether at the Master in Theology or doctoral level (1998 – 2003). It is only in setting up the Catechesis for Learners with Special Needs (CLSN) Ministry in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur that I have started to learn more about this area from parents or caregivers with children with Special Needs and parish catechists supporting learners with Special Needs.

## The Church deepens her awareness

In reading the Church's catechetical documents, I realise that the Church's understanding of catechesis or faith formation for learners with Special Needs is also evolving. This can be seen clearly in the three catechetical directories that were published by the Vatican in 1971 (*General Catechetical Directory*), 1997 (*General Directory for Catechesis*) and 2020 (*Directory for Catechesis*) respectively.

## A change in the use of terms

For example, when referring to this area

of catechesis, the 'heading' used by the respective directories are:

- 1971 directory: *Children and Adolescents Not Adjusted to the Conditions of Life.*
- 1997 directory: *The Disabled and Handicapped.*
- 2020 directory: *Catechesis with Persons with Disabilities.*

In the 2020 directory, two important aspects can be seen:

*Catechesis is something we do with them*

Firstly, it states "Catechesis with Persons with Disabilities" instead of "Catechesis for Persons with Disabilities". It seems to denote that catechesis is not something we do *for* those with Special Needs but something we do *with* them. It also means that persons with Special Needs are not to be seen as passive or helpless recipients but rather, they are themselves active subjects of their own learning and formation. In other words, we do not teach learners with Special Needs. We only support their own learning.

*We should adapt to their "condition"*

Secondly, the Directory emphasises the term "persons" instead of using terms such as "the handicapped" or "the disabled". It means that we have to recognise and give primary importance to the uniqueness and sacredness of the person rather than emphasise his or her condition or his or her inability to adapt to the normal conditions of life. It also means we should not expect those with disabilities to adapt to our conditions. Instead, we have to adapt to theirs.

## Points for reflection and growth

There are six points from the 2020 *Directory for Catechesis* that can help us deepen

our understanding of persons with Special Needs in the Church (DC, 269 – 272).

1. The Church's concern for persons with disabilities finds its source in the incarnation of Christ. Just as God became flesh in order to share the life of humanity, God desires to share and make Himself present in the life of every person. This includes persons with Special Needs. They too are called to faith and to all that is good and meaningful.
2. We are not merely to take care of persons with disabilities but to recognise Christ who is present in them. It calls for us to be aware that it is possible to form persons with Special Needs, including those with very serious disabilities, in the faith because Christ lives in them.
3. The Church considers persons with disabilities are a growth opportunity for the community. They challenge us to welcome and accept diversity in our midst and to acknowledge that each person created by God is unique. They remind us that life is fragile and that suffering is part of the human condition. The Directory states: "Precisely because they are witnesses to the essential truths of human life, persons with disabilities must be welcomed as a great gift".
4. Communities have to be open to receive and welcome the presence of persons with disabilities. We have to work "towards a culture of inclusion...". In catechesis, new channels of communication and methods must be sought to help them encounter Jesus.
5. The community must be close to the parents of persons with disabilities, accompany and help them integrate into the community. The Directory states:

"The openness to life of these families is a witness that deserves great respect and admiration". In the present prevailing culture of death, it would certainly have been easy for many parents with children with disabilities to have given up hope or not to proceed with raising and caring for their children. But they have courage and faithfully done so. Truly, we have to respect and admire them, and more importantly, support them.

6. Persons with disabilities are called to the fullness of sacramental life, even in the presence of severe disorders. The sacraments are a gift from God. Therefore, "no one can refuse the sacraments to those with disabilities". In addition, including them in the community and involving them in the liturgy is important.

## Conclusion

These are key guidelines by the Church with regards to catechesis for persons with Special Needs. However, we have to become aware that every person with Special Needs is unique. Therefore, supporting him or her with catechesis and in the reception of the sacraments requires special attention and care. It also shows that there is so much that has to be done in this area and we still have a long way to go. But with the proper awareness and response on the part of all concerned, we can make small but important steps in the right direction.

● **Dr Steven Selvaraju, STD, STL,** holds a Doctorate in Theology with Specialisation in Catechetics and Youth Ministry from Pontifical Salesian University, Rome. He serves as Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Centre, Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

## CATECHESIS FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Panel 1 (Top Left):** Key message: "We have to be aware that...". Scene: A woman in a yellow shirt welcomes a child in a blue shirt to a catechism class. Speech bubbles: "Hi John! Welcome to our catechism class." and "God desires to make Himself present in every person, including persons with Special Needs."

**Panel 2 (Top Middle):** Key message: "It is possible to form persons with Special Needs in the faith because Jesus is in them." Scene: A woman in a yellow shirt sits at a table with a child in a blue shirt. Speech bubbles: "It's okay. Take your time." and "Persons with Special Needs challenge us to welcome and accept diversity in our midst and to acknowledge that each person created by God is unique."

**Panel 3 (Top Right):** Key message: "Persons with Special Needs challenge us to welcome and accept diversity in our midst and to acknowledge that each person created by God is unique." Scene: A woman in a yellow shirt points towards a group of people in the distance. Speech bubbles: "Hi John!" and "Look, there's Aunt Mary waving at you."

**Panel 4 (Bottom Left):** Key message: "We have to work towards a 'culture of inclusion' so that all persons feel welcomed and accepted." Scene: A woman in a purple shirt greets a man in a white shirt. Speech bubbles: "Hi John. It's so nice to see you!" and "Good morning, Father!"

**Panel 5 (Bottom Middle):** Key message: "We have to be close to the parents and caregivers of children with Special Needs, accompanying and helping them integrate into the community." Scene: A woman in a purple shirt with a 'HOSPITALITY' sash talks to a man in a blue shirt with a 'HOSPITALITY' sash. Speech bubbles: "Let us know if you need any help." and "We have to be close to the parents and caregivers of children with Special Needs, accompanying and helping them integrate into the community."

**Panel 6 (Bottom Right):** Key message: "The sacraments are a gift from God. Therefore, 'no one can refuse the sacraments to those with disabilities'. They should also be included in the community and in the liturgy." Scene: A man in a green shirt offers a chalice to a child in a blue shirt. Speech bubbles: "Body of Christ!" and "Hi John!"



# Putting out with faith into the deep and dark interiors

By Lucille Dass

Teach For Malaysia (TFM) – has a positively exclusive ring to it, right? Meet 27-year-old TFM teacher, Shawn Stanly Anthony Dass (no, we are not related), a Form 3 science *cikgu* in a high-needs school, SK RPS (Rancangan Penempatan Semula) Banun, an all Orang Asli school in the interiors of Gerik, Perak (a Resettlement Programme under the Ministry of Education (MOE). Shawn hails from City Parish, Penang, and it was his former parish priest, Fr Aloysius Tan (currently in Malta), who alerted *HERALD* about his feats.

## Back-story

A post-STPM stint at a tuition centre while waiting for university applications decided Shawn on a teaching career. Mark his reasons. “Majority of the children who walked through the doors of the centre came from underprivileged families, struggled academically, or were unmotivated, given their poor socio-economic background.” In comparison, he realised how blessed he was to have had a sound education. He applied to study Education, intent “on doing more in the education space.” But, “God had a different plan for me. I was offered a Bachelor in Social Sciences majoring in International Relations at Universiti Sabah Malaysia.” Although “frustrated at the offer, because all I wanted was to become a teacher,” he accepted it since entry into a public university does not come easy. Moreover, it would ease his parents’ financial burden. Meanwhile, his desire to teach did not diminish. His search led him to the TFM programme.

## About TFM and its training programme

TFM is a not-for-profit organisation that works in partnership with the MOE. The TFM flagship is a Fellowship programme that recruits and places high potential Malaysian undergraduates and young professionals keen to contribute to the Malaysian education system as teaching fellows in a high-needs school for two years. Since most recruits in his batch of 27 lacked a background in education, they went through an eight-week “rigorous training” in lesson planning and classroom management before heading off to schools to work as co-teachers.

## School profile and red flag issues

This K9 model school for Primary 1 to Form 3 students “is situated uniquely in the heart of eighteen Orang Asli villages.” Access to school could take an hour’s boat ride, or a 45-minute off the road drive, weather permitting, as “muddy terrain” during the monsoon render the tracks inaccessible. Not forgetting “the daily struggle with wildlife threats that include disgruntled elephants disconnecting the piping system and disrupting their water source.” And once, a tiger went to school too! This *cikgu* soon learnt to fix water pipes and keep his wards safe from wildlife. Another gloom – the general negative opinion held of students from the interior and their capacity to learn. Sadly, the nay sayers included folks in authority, including teachers themselves who felt it “a waste of time putting in too much effort” (I’ve heard that before...and of a city school!). Add illiteracy and high dropout rates to the pile of issues that plagued the school. “Imagine going to a class where only two out of 22 students can read and write! And you have to teach them the science syllabus.”

## Meeting the needs through innovative instructional strategies

Undaunted, and driven by his passion, Shawn who was tagged with a senior teacher-mentor Cikgu Johari, set out to explore methods that might work in these challenging terrains. Interestingly, both had zero

experience teaching Orang Asli children. Shawn resorted to hands-on pedagogy — using simulation and role play that involved students, to create a “world” of context and content — a learner-centred process that motivated students to achieve the learning outcomes. “Many realities were distant to my students as they lived in the interiors where the nearest village lay two hours away, what more a city?” Shawn fed their curiosity, and helped them utilise their hidden assets and minimise their deficits through the use of mixed learning modalities. On being asked how he travelled to Sabah to study, Shawn gave them a feel of flying, “I built a flight simulator using resources available in the surroundings.” Similarly, when a boy asked what a beach looked like while studying about marine life, Penangite Shawn collected sand and seawater galore to create “a beach-themed classroom” to teach them about marine conservation. A class trip to Penang fed them their “first view of a beach” and when one student asked why there was trash in the sea, his peers readily turned teachers to recall and connect with related content learned in class!

Shawn successfully challenged the commonly held notion that Orang Asli students are slow learners. He trained his team of two Form 3 students to design prototypes of water works. They won first prize at the zone level, defeating five other schools and earned fourth place at the district level in The STEM Water Rocket Challenge in 2023.

## Taking to the skies

Here’s a feat few can beat; a rare feather in the Orang Asli students’ headgear! Early 2024 saw Shawn take two students, Agah and Safika, to a leadership summit, “Kids Education Revolution” in Mumbai, India! As the summit was in English, Shawn translated. He was delighted that they confidently shared their thoughts and ideas using BM during the group sessions. They even made many friends, and using Mr Google as their translator, their communication with friends in India remains afloat.



Shawn sees teaching as a calling – called to a mission into the interiors to serve the marginalised. He believes God has called him to be “an agent of change ... for the greater good of the community.”

While on the flight, Shawn reveals that Agah shared how he was once told, “*Orang Asli mana boleh maju dan pergi jauh? Kamu duduk di kampung saja lah.*” (How can the Orang Asli go far or be successful? Just stay put in your village.) Sadly, most of the children have been stigmatised with “such stereotypical prejudices.” But now Agah is sufficiently inspired to use his free time “to teach some villagers who are undocumented and can’t attend school.” Both Agah and Safika returned home “with a renewed sense of energy and spirit to uplift their villagers.”

Having experienced new things away from home — both near and far — opened up the students’ mindsets to give them a new perspective of life. They are now more aware of their surroundings and raring to go MAD (make a difference) in ways they can.

## A teacher-leader

Cikgu Shawn has proven that he is far from being just a salaried worker; he is a community leader who has sown seeds of love, trust, and diligent cooperation to enhance lives. His experience leads him to say that when placed within such a community, “don’t come in with a saviour mindset; you are there not to save them but to work with them.” He built relationships with the parents and community leaders to convince them of the value of education for advancement. Happily, school attendance and literacy levels have improved, drop-out rate has fallen. Shawn humbly let the context of his surroundings both inform and form him to become who he is. Teachers will do well to mark this!

## Faith-filled and Spirit-led (Acts 6:5, 11:24)

Shawn sees teaching as a calling – called to a mission into the interiors to serve the marginalised. He believes God has called him to be “an agent of change ... for the greater good of the community.” The path has been rough but Shawn stayed tough, empowered by the Holy Spirit from within. And as he leaves, Shawn hopes that one day his students will perpetuate the positive ripple effect experienced.

## Rise Educator Award 2024

Deservingly, Shawn was nominated for this award. It recognises excellence and dedication in education, honouring educators who go beyond the call of duty to impact community. He stands shortlisted as a Top 5 Finalist. Winner walks away with RM20,000 in aid of upgrading school facilities, and RM5,000 as an individual prize. Results may be out even as you read this.... But Shawn, know this...the teaching fraternity and the Catholic community salute you; you’re already a winner in our eyes.



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Cikgu Shawn feeding the curiosity of the students and helping them utilise their hidden assets and minimise their deficits through the use of mixed learning modalities.





# Reading, believing, practising



## MAKING SENSE

Emmanuel Joseph

There is a beautiful charge delivered by an ordaining bishop during an ordination of a deacon — *Read the Word, Believe what you Read, Teach what you Believe and Practise what you Teach.*

The flow of language is as meaningful as it is poetic.

For the ordinary Catholic, called as we are to the priesthood of all believers, reaching the state of a strong belief itself, is a challenge, momentous, at times.

Grappling with the Bible and its many types of books within — historical, gospel, epistles, books of law and poetry and prophecies — trying to make sense of what's literal and what's not, or if logic can or should be applied to it at all.

In an age where TikTok is full of anti-Christian rhetoric, a one liner can sometimes throw doubt on 10 years of catechism.

Did Judas hang himself or fell and burst open? Did God create man first, or animals? How many of each animal went into Noah's Ark? Why does the last line of 2 Chronicles repeat into the first lines of Ezra? Why are the passages in 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 practically identical?

While we are taught things like stewardship of this world, the value of life, the Sacraments

and relationships — familial, communal, pastoral — these are the arguments that are, by design, meant to plant seeds of doubt in our faith in the Word.

If it is hard to Believe, how much harder must it be to Teach?

We already have strong and active groups that work to debunk misconceptions and engage in both apologetics and polemics.

Your average parish priest is more than armed to answer these, with advanced training in theology, the social context and historical significance of the teaching, law and event, for a comprehensive understanding of the Bible.

What more to be a Catholic — unlike our younger Evangelical counterparts, we have the additional dimension of tradition, history that seem almost out of modern-day reality as a school scene out of the pages of Harry Potter — or as a priest friend calls it, “the bells and smells”.

In a time where literacy was low and colours was used to evoke emotion, the need to wear black cassocks to indicate mourning our Saviour, or gold to indicate celebration, or red to show sacrifice, was more understandable.

“Can God not hear us if we wear normal clothes?” is something another friend, a well-known social commentator, used to ask me, about not only Catholic, but any clerical garb.

But the connection of liturgical colours of cloth, or even celebrating Mass on Sunday, or offertory processions, praise and worship, Bible-preaching, or the Sacraments, are all part of the same Tradition, chosen and framed by different people at different points of history,

for different reasons. As we learn in Acts, our early Christian leaders were breaking bread and preaching before the Gospels were even written down.

Our practices, rites and rituals are beautiful but they can be a bit confusing — why do Orthodox, Catholic and some Anglicans call their priests Father? Why is Kyrie sung in Greek unlike other traditional prayers — in Latin?

While these might not be playing in every young Catholic's mind, it would, if unsatisfactorily answered, lead those curious enough to ask them, to find other religious direction, one that is less ‘complicated’, and easier to make sense of in our simplified, data-and-logic-driven world.

Then comes the social aspect of things — in a secular world pressured to conform to the politically correct, where people have freedom to define themselves, their gender expression, even their pronouns, and whose congregations empathise with many of these ideals while not necessarily practising them, how tolerant are we allowed, or expected, to be, as individual Catholics, members of our community or as citizens? In other words, how much of our values need to intersect with that of the Church for us to continue to comfortably belong?

These are loaded, landmine-type questions that, to be honest, most of us are just too afraid to ask or push for, with many just mousing away to parishes that are less or more firebrand to their tolerance of heat of hellfire, or aligned to the flavour of Catholicism most aligned to our own general values — drawing

from shades of love and acceptance, tones set from present leadership of our Holy Father.

Is it wrong then to not want to be part of the discussions, either the angry, borderline schismatic ones, nor the uncomfortable attempts of the Church to reach out and explain its position?

Is this cafeteria Catholicism? Maybe, but is not the heart of our identity, that sets us apart from the more End of Days type preachers, one more gentle to rebuke, slow to anger, quick to love?

The Church today, after all, is barely recognisable in almost every form after Vatican II, in our dealings with each other, and with other faiths and communities, with a much larger focus on laity and their participation, rather than the more rigid, clerical-driven organisation it was.

Clumsy or unrefined as they may be, these attempts to understand the world would have been inconceivable just six or seven decades ago, with questioners branded heretic, and schismatic movements following that.

Perhaps, while waiting for a definitive answer, trying to practise what we Teach, as much as we can, to Believe that in due course, any two polar positions can be more reconciliatory than combative.

Isn't that, at least, a form of Faith?

● Emmanuel Joseph oversees IT as his 9-5 job and from 5-9, he serves a few NGOs, think tanks and volunteer groups. He serves as an advisor for Projek Dialog and is a Fellow with the Institute of Research and Development of Policy.



## FAITHFULLY SPEAKING

Julie Lim Seet Yin

Many of us love to travel, and we travel for various reasons. Some of us travel to experience the culture and food in another country. Some travel to marvel at natural wonders, and man-made architectural feats. And some of us encounter God when we travel.

Since we are in the month of June, I thought that I should share about my faith-filled encounters when travelling, particularly because the first story happened in June during the Feast of St Anthony of Padua.

### Bargaining with St Anthony of Padua

In June 2023, during a trip to Perhentian Island, I lost my room key. After travelling to numerous countries, this was the first time that I had lost a room key.

I had kept the key in my pocket and went to pick up rubbish on the beach. After a while, I suddenly realised that the key was no longer in my pocket. We traced back the path where we had walked but could not find it.

When we went to get a spare key from reception, the staff informed us that there was a MYR100.00 charge for guests who lost their room key. I was ready to beat myself up as I could have done so many things with MYR100.00. The staff advised us to continue looking for the key as we were staying 3 more nights at the resort.

Coincidentally, I had lost the key on June 12, which was the day before the Feast of St Anthony of Padua, the patron saint for lost items. Due to the coincidence in timing, I whispered to St Anthony that if the key was found, I would donate MYR100.00 (which was equivalent to the fine) to the Church of St Anthony at Pudu, Kuala Lumpur. Might as

## Faith-filled encounters while travelling

well donate the fine to a parish than pay it to the resort for nothing.

On the morning of June 13, which was the Feast of St Anthony of Padua, the key was still not found. I was ready to concede and pay the MYR100.00 fine. However, at 5.20pm, whilst we were lazing on the porch of our chalet, a couple turned up at our doorstep with the key! The husband said they found it on the beach near a few boats. Interestingly, we had looked hard in that very area the day before but had not found the key.

I was speechless and couldn't stop grinning. After thanking the couple, I whispered, “St Anthony, you are truly the patron saint for missing items!”

### Couldn't find the church

The next story happened in October 2019 during a trip to Prague in the Czech Republic (also known as Czechia) when I wanted to attend Mass.

I was travelling with a church friend to the Czech Republic. Being faithful Roman Catholics, we naturally wanted to attend Sunday Mass.

Most of the Masses in Prague were in the local language and the only Mass in the English language (that we could find) was sunset Mass at the Church of St Thomas. The church is located in the Mala Strana district of Prague, near the infamous Charles Bridge that links Prague's Old and New Towns.

On that Saturday afternoon, we took the tram from our hotel and when we reached the Mala Strana district, I whipped out my mobile phone, activated Google Maps and began looking for the Church of St Thomas.

After walking around the area in circles, we still couldn't find it. We asked people in the area but nobody seemed to know where the church was. After trying to locate the church for almost an hour, and realising that Mass was about to begin in 30 minutes, I began to despair. I saw a guy standing outside a shop

and made a last desperate attempt to ask him. I told myself that if this guy too didn't know where the Church of St Thomas was, then we would kiss our intention of attending Sunset Mass goodbye.

When the guy shook his head indicating that he didn't know where the church was, my hopes of attending sunset Mass were dashed.

As we stood there looking dejected, we heard a voice from behind, “Are you looking for the Church of St Thomas?”

We turned around and saw an elderly man. “Come follow me,” he said, and started walking.

Just as we teach our children not to follow strangers, I asked him who he was.

“I am Fr William, the parish priest of the Church of St Thomas. I am going to the church now to celebrate Mass.”

I was relieved and amazed at the same time. Relieved that we could now attend Mass, and amazed at how our search for the church panned out. What were the odds of bumping into the parish priest of the very church that we were trying so hard to find?

When Fr William brought us to the Church of St Thomas, we were led into a side gate, passed a dark corridor and into the church itself. The church was less than 100m from where we had asked the last guy for directions. The entrance was not clearly visible from the road and there were no signboards. That is probably why we couldn't find it.

During Mass, tears were streaming down my face. When I looked at the cross above the altar, I felt the immense love of God. My friend said that if one wants to attend Mass so badly and is trying their very best to do so, God will enable it. I thought that is so true.

So, you see, travelling can be an amazing adventure to encounter the divine. It offers us the opportunity to experience the love of God in a different but profound way. May our travels always lead us to faith-filled encounters with Him.



(Unsplash/Timo Stern)

● Julie Lim Seet Yin believes that a satisfied life measured by one's heart, mind and soul is better than a successful life measured by worldly yardsticks.





Fr Ron Rolheiser

# We are better and worse than we think

Our own complexity can be befuddling. We are better than we think and worse than we imagine, too hard and too easy on ourselves all at the same time. We are a curious mix.

On the one hand, we are good. All of us are made in the image and likeness of God and are, as Aristotle and Aquinas affirm, *metaphysically good*. That's true, but our goodness is also less abstract. We are good too, at least most of the time, in our everyday lives.

Generally, we are generous, often to a fault. Despite appearances sometimes, mostly we are warm and hospitable. The same is true in terms of the basic intent in both our minds and our hearts. We have big hearts. Inside everyone, easily triggered by the slightest touch of love or affirmation, lies a big heart, a grand soul, a *magna anima*, that's itching to be altruistic. Mostly, the problem isn't with our goodness, but with our frustration in trying to live that out in the world. Too often, we appear cold and self-centred when we're only frustrated, hurt, and wounded.

We don't always appear to be good, but mostly we are; though often we are frustrated because we cannot (for reasons of circumstance, wound, and sensitivity) pour out our goodness as we would like, nor embrace the world and those around us with the warmth that's in us. We go

through life looking for a warm place to show who we are and often don't find it. We're not so much bad as frustrated. We're more loving than we imagine.

But that's half of it, there's another side: we're also sinners, more so than we think. An old Protestant dictum about human nature, based on St Paul, puts it accurately: "It's not a question of are you a sinner? It's only a question of what is your sin?" We're all sinners, and just as we possess a big heart and a grand soul, we also possess a petty one (a *pusilla anima*). At the very root of our instinctual make-up, there's selfishness, jealousy, and pettiness of heart and mind.

Moreover, we are often blind to our real faults. As Jesus says, we easily see the speck on our neighbour's eye and miss the plank in our own. And that generally makes for a strange irony, that is, where we think we are sinners is usually not the place where others struggle the most with us or where our real faults lie. Conversely, it's often in those areas where we think we are virtuous and righteous that our real sin lies and where others struggle with us.

For example, we have forever put a lot of emphasis on the sixth commandment and haven't been nearly as self-scrutinising in regard to the fifth commandment (which deals with bitterness, judgments, anger, and hatred) or with the ninth and

tenth commandments (that have to do with jealousy). It's not that sexual ethics are unimportant, but our failures here are harder to rationalise. The same isn't true for bitterness, anger, especially righteous anger, nor for jealousy. We can more easily rationalise these and not notice that jealousy is the only sin for which God felt it necessary to write two commandments. We are worse than we imagine and mostly blind to our real faults.

So where does that leave us? In better and worse shape than we think. If we could recognise that we're more lovely than we imagine and more sinful than we suppose, that could be helpful, both for our self-understanding and for how we understand God's love and grace in our lives.

Aristotle says, "two contraries cannot co-exist within the same subject". He's right metaphysically, but two contraries can (and do) exist inside of us morally. We're both good and bad, generous and selfish, big-hearted and petty, gracious and bitter, forgiving and resentful, hospitable and cold, full of grace and full of sin, all at the same time. Moreover, we're generally too blind to both, too unaware of our loveliness as well as of our nastiness.

To recognise this can be humbling and freeing. We are loved sinners. Both good-

ness and sin make up our identity. Not to recognise this truth leaves us either unhealthily depressed or dangerously inflated, too hard or too easy on ourselves. The truth will set us free, and the truth about ourselves is that we're both better and worse than we picture ourselves to be.

Robert Funk once formulated three dictums on grace which speak to this. He writes:

*\*Grace always wounds from behind, at the point where we think we are least vulnerable.*

*\*Grace is harder than we think: we moralise judgment in order to take the edge off it.*

*\*Grace is more indulgent than we think: but it is never indulgent at the point where we think it might be indulgent.*

We need to be both easier and harder on ourselves – and open to the way grace works.

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

At the heart of Christian discipleship is the call to prayer. As followers of the Lord Jesus, we are invited to walk His way, and such a way centres around prayer. We cannot faithfully live the Christian way of life if we are not living a life of prayer.

The Lord Jesus showed us the importance of prayer by surrounding His own life with times and moments of prayer.

In addition, the Lord also taught about prayer and stressed its importance to us. Such teachings are especially found in His collection of parables. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us: "Three principal parables on prayer are transmitted to us by St Luke."

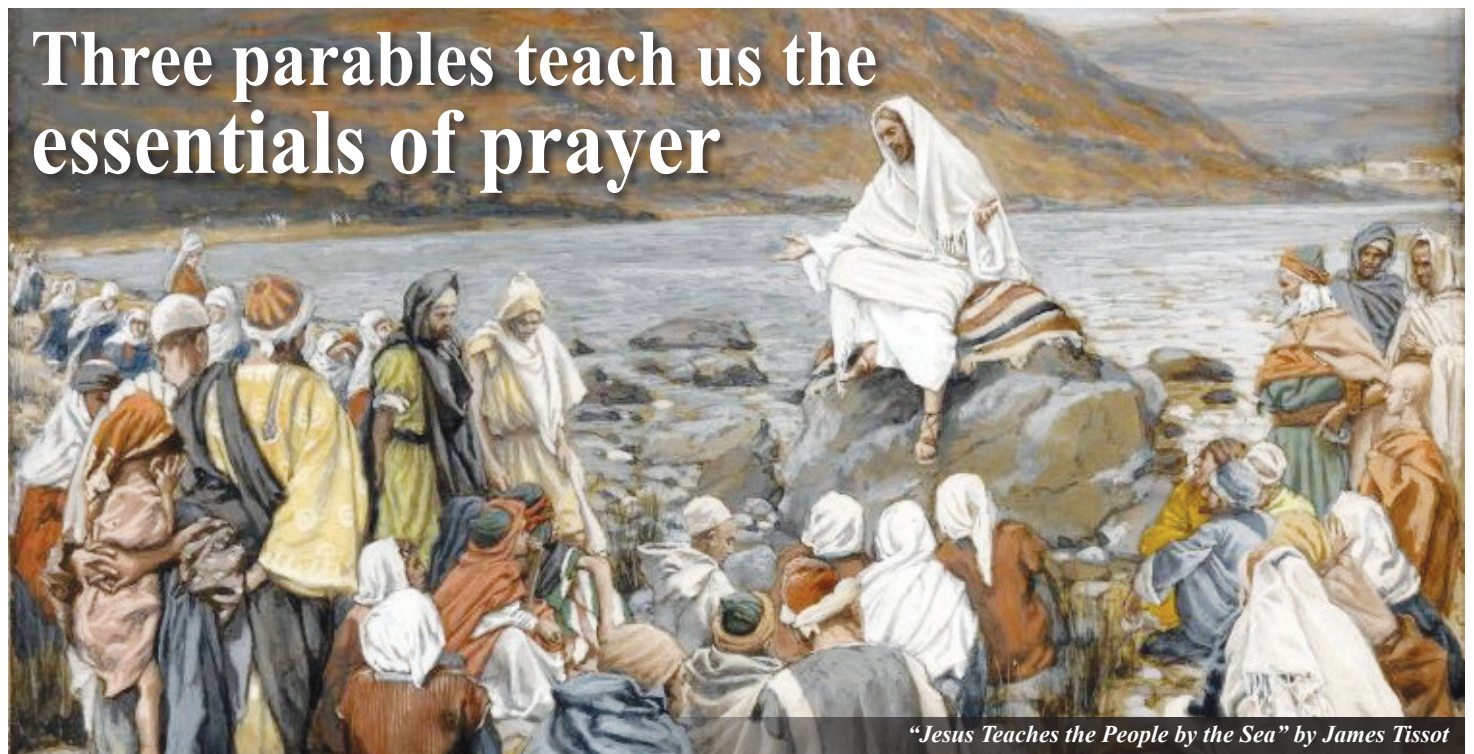
Each of these three principal parables highlights some essential aspect of prayer.

The first parable is of the friend who comes at night and needs food for a guest. The *Catechism* tells us: "The first [parable], 'the importunate friend,' invites us to urgent prayer: 'Knock, and it will be opened to you.' To the one who prays like this, the heavenly Father will 'give whatever he needs,' and above all, the Holy Spirit who contains all gifts."

The parable rightly stresses the urgency of prayer, especially when there are pressing or emergency needs. It is the power of prayer that will turn chaos into peace, distress into tranquillity. We turn to prayer in order to regain what has been taken from our souls by stressful situations. We turn to prayer to encounter God and find virtuous and good solutions to unsettling state of affairs. We slow down, commune with God — Who is above all things, receive divine wisdom, and then take actions that will diminish or end the distress.

The second parable is about the widow who harasses the judge for a verdict. She is relentless and exhausts the judge to the point that he gives a ruling on her case. The *Catechism* teaches: "The second, 'the

## Three parables teach us the essentials of prayer



"Jesus Teaches the People by the Sea" by James Tissot

importunate widow,' is centred on one of the qualities of prayer: it is necessary to pray always without ceasing and with the patience of faith. 'And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?'"

Perseverance is a rare virtue in Western society today. Many people are eager to roll over, admit defeat, and move along. Such defeatism is also found in prayer. Some will say, "I tried to pray, but it didn't work!" Work? What exactly is meant when someone says prayer doesn't work? It oftentimes means that the person didn't get what they wanted, when they wanted, and how they wanted. In other words, God didn't obey them.

Prayer, however, is not about getting something. It's about encountering God and being changed by His grace. Prayer works,

if we're willing to persevere. Sometimes, we get what we want. Other times, not so much. In either case, prayer works. God's will is done. Our task is to persevere and trust in His ways.

The third parable is about the Pharisee and the tax collector in the Temple. The Pharisee is filled with self-importance and pride, while the tax collector knows that he is a sinner, beats his breast and begs for mercy. The *Catechism* teaches: "The third parable, 'the Pharisee and the tax collector,' concerns the humility of the heart that prays. 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' The Church continues to make this prayer its own: *Kyrie eleison!*"

Humility is the only path that prayer feels comfortable to tread. Humility is needed if we are going to truly pray. It is only the

heart that knows where it stands before God that will have the necessary openness to truly pray, speaking honestly before God and quieting itself so that God can be heard and listened to when He speaks. Docility is the key that opens the spiritual life.

The way of humility is the way of the Lord, and so humility is the way of prayer. Pride and arrogance pounce on the soul and hubris chokes the life of grace from the heart. In such slavery, the soul cannot aspire or respond to the call of prayer.

In these three parables, the Lord Jesus gives us a plain, no-nonsense instruction on prayer. Prayer needs a sense of urgency. Prayer needs to persevere. And prayer needs humility if it is going to grow and flourish within us. — **By Fr Jeffrey F. Kirby, *Cruz***



# Little Catholics' Corner

Dear children,

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells us about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Heaven isn't just where we will go when we die if we were good.

Jesus was telling us that Heaven grows in our hearts when we choose to love God and each other.

Our Lord compares the Kingdom of Heaven to plants that grow from little seeds.

When we were baptised, we received the gift of Faith. When we receive the other sacraments, especially Holy Communion, Faith grows in us, like a plant that has water and sunshine.

If we sin, it's like little bugs or sickness that start to kill the plant. Confession will take those away so that our Faith can grow again.

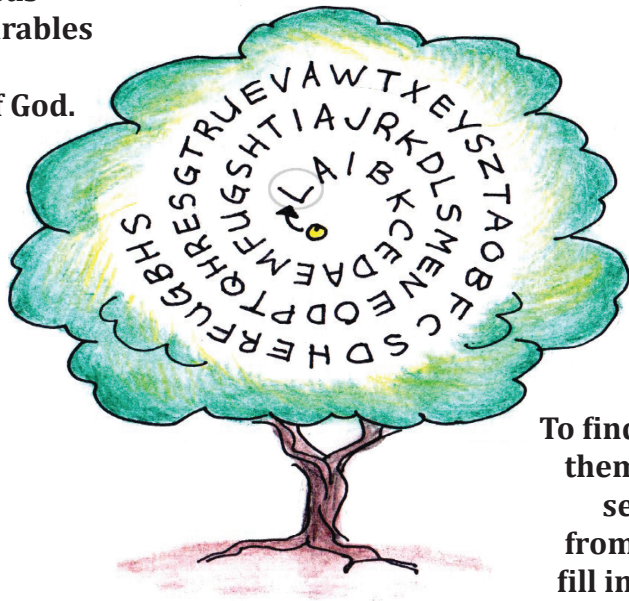
How can you help the Kingdom of Heaven to grow in you? Going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion whenever you can and going

to Confession often are the best ways.

Praying every day and learning about the Faith and about the saints will also help the Kingdom of Heaven to grow in your heart like a strong, healthy plant!

Love  
Aunty Eliz

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells two parables about the Kingdom of God.



To find out one of them, use every second letter from the tree to fill in the blanks below.

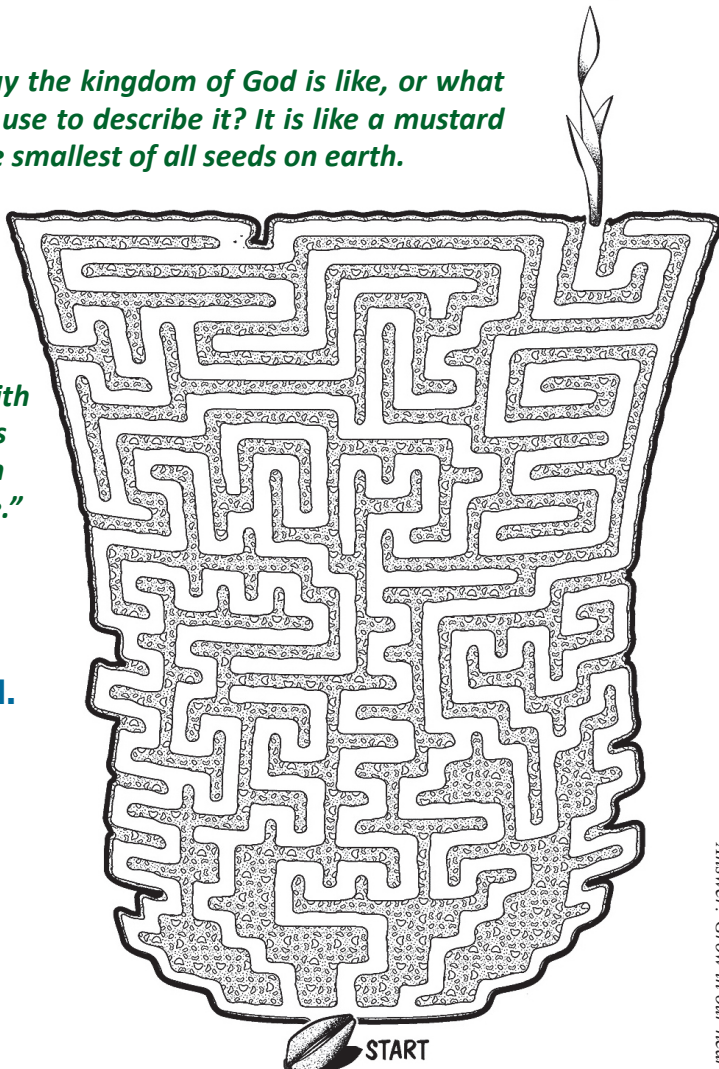
The Kingdom of Heaven is  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 When it grows up it becomes  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer: Like a mustard seed ... the greatest of shrubs

What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth.

Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." (Mark 4:30-32).

Find the right route for the shoot to travel.



Answer: Grow in our heart.

## Happy Father's Day



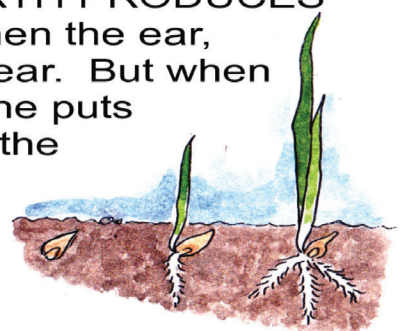
Father's Day falls on June 16th this year. Let us say an "Our Father" in remembrance, honour, and prayer for all fathers worldwide.

COLOUR THE PICTURE

### A Kingdom of God Word-Find

"The KINGDOM of GOD is as if a MAN should SCATTER seed upon the GROUND, and should SLEEP and RISE NIGHT and DAY, and the SEED should SPROUT and GROW, he KNOWS not how. The EARTH PRODUCES of itself, first the BLADE, then the ear, then the full GRAIN in the ear. But when the grain is RIPE, at once he puts in the SICKLE, BECAUSE the HARVEST has come."

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



Find the words in CAPITALS in this part of today's Gospel reading in the puzzle. Use the left-over letters to fill in the blanks at the end.

The Church helps our love for God to

\_\_\_\_\_



# YOUTH

June 16, 2024

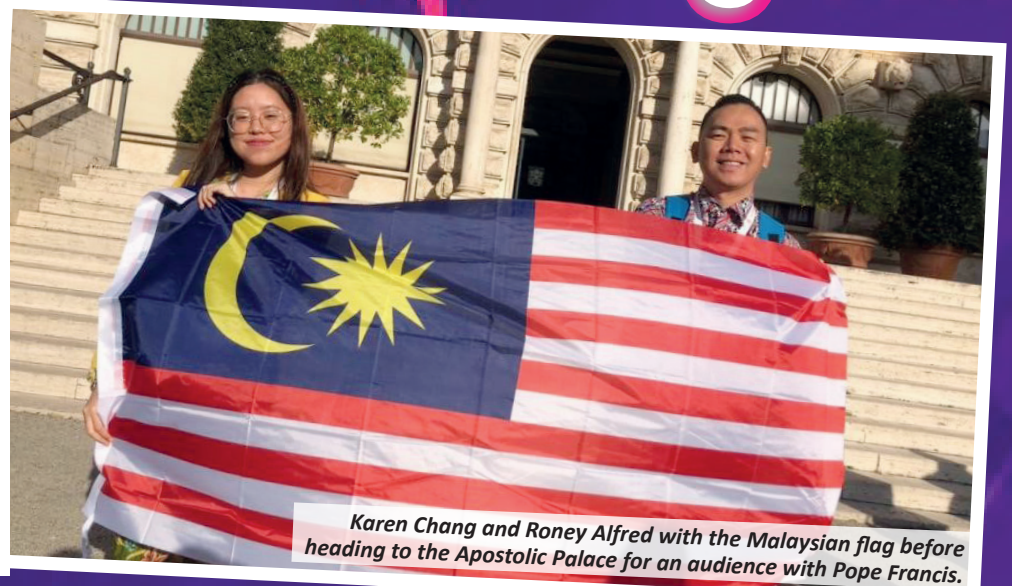
## Malaysians at the Youth Congress

**T**he International Youth Ministry Congress, organised by the Dicastery of Laity and Family Life (DLFL), was held in Rome from May 22-26. Each country was asked to send two representatives: one from the national youth office and a young layperson aged 18-28 with experience in youth ministry.

Malaysia was represented by Roney Alfred from Keningau for the national coordinating team of the Malaysian Catholic Youth Ministers' Committee (MCYMC), and Karen Chan was nominated by MCYMC to represent the young lay.

The congress featured reports on World Youth Day 2023 and information about the upcoming Jubilee of the Youth in 2025 and World Youth Day 2027. Each country received questionnaires to assess WYD2023 and discuss the changes and challenges of the past five years, considering the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* and the Final Document of the 2018 Synod. MCYMC's responses were compiled and submitted before the congress (more in our next issue). A summary of the data received by DLFL were presented to share generally about the current realities of the young and the youth offices.

Here are the sharings from Karen and Roney.



Karen Chang and Roney Alfred with the Malaysian flag before heading to the Apostolic Palace for an audience with Pope Francis.



with representatives from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Bangkok

### Karen Chan

At the end of Day 1, the delegates enjoyed a cultural experience shared by the WYD2027 organising team from the Archdiocese of Seoul and Korean representatives in Rome, who shared their food, music, dances, and songs.

There were several formation and sharing sessions on new leadership styles and strategies for a synodal youth ministry. Delegates were divided into groups to discuss insights from the talks. My group included delegates from Bangladesh, Rwanda, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and Christian Life Community (CLC). Despite our diverse backgrounds, we found common ground in our youth ministry experiences and the challenges faced by local youths. I also served as our group's reporter, noting key points from our discussions and presenting them to the entire assembly and the dicastery.

A highlight of the congress was meeting Pope Francis at the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City. Upon entering the meeting hall, we were thrilled to learn we would shake hands with the Pope. Pope Francis gave an address to the participants of the congress, and one part that struck me the most was this: "Young people should not be pushed into promoting ideas and activities already decided by others, or that do not really meet their needs. No. Young people should be empowered, involved in dialogue, in planning activities, in decisions. They should be made to feel that they are an active and full part of the life of the Church; and above all that they are called to be the first to bring the Gospel message to their peers." I also felt truly blessed to shake hands with the Pope while showcasing the Malaysian culture in my *nyonya kebaya*. Following the audience, we had a Eucharistic celebration at St Peter's Basilica, which was another unforgettable experience.

From the congress, my understanding towards

synodality and spiritual conversations have deepened, thanks to the formation sessions given and group sharings. With all the delegates I met, friendships were made, ideas were exchanged, and our lives were shared in that one week. On our last day, we sang in our respective languages and danced together, united by our common faith in Christ. With the new knowledge and experiences gained from the congress,



photo/Vatican Media

I pray I will be able to work towards being a synodal pastoral worker for the young people, one who listens earnestly and care for them with a motherly love, bringing the hope and love of Christ into their lives.

I would like to thank the Dicastery of Laity and Family Life for organising the International Youth Ministry Congress 2024 and for their hospitality, formation, and the opportunity to gather with delegates from around the world.

I also thank Archbishop Simon Poh, the bishop-in-charge for youths in Malaysia, and MCYMC for enabling me to attend the congress. My thanks extend to Bishop Bernard Paul of the Malacca Johore Diocese and the MJD Young People Network (MJDYPN) for supporting my nomination and journey to Rome. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family, friends, and all the saints in heaven who have prayed for me. May God bless us all.



Karen presenting the outcome of the spiritual conversation from her group to the entire assembly.



Group sharing. (flickr/Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life)



Choir for Masses celebrated in Istituto Madonna del Carmine "Il Carmelo".





# ALL READY FOR MCYPA

KINARUT, Sabah: The Malaysian Catholic Youth Ministers Committee (MCYMC) retreat cum meeting held recently was vital in preparing for the Malaysian Catholic Young People Assembly (MCYPA) in 2025.

This gathering, hosted at the Chapel of St Paul on-the-Hill in Kinarut, Sabah, brought together 28 young representatives from nine dioceses in Malaysia. The purpose was to discuss the programme and roles for the MCYPA, an initiative aimed at involving all Catholic youth in Malaysia leading up to the 2025 Pastoral Convention Malaysia (MPC).

The MCYMC, led by Gregory Pravin Rajah (Peninsular), Sr Terecia Loukang (Sabah), and Maria Amella (Sarawak), focused on expanding involvement beyond campus ministry to include working youth, those working with youth, and those who provide support in the parish. This shift was deemed essential for a more inclusive approach to youth ministry.

The retreat component of the meeting, facilitated by Fr Clarence Devadass and Anna Amandus, introduced participants to the synodal discussion approach used in the Vatican's Synod of Bishops. This approach emphasised spiritual conversation, fostering deeper



introspection and understanding of one's personality and spirituality.

Gregory highlighted the significance of realising one's value and journey through spiritual conversation, emphasising the belief that everyone is somebody in God's eyes. The MCYPA programme will employ this spiritual conversation approach, focusing on the themes of Church, Family, Ecology, and Society, aligning with the MPC's objectives.

Sr Terecia, from the Kota Kinabalu Youth Commission, emphasised the importance of listening and spiritual conversation as foundational aspects of the MCYPA programme, echoing the Holy Father's endorsement of this approach for the Church's renewal.

Maria Amella, a member of the Kuching Youth Commission, shared her experiences of understanding the Church's challenges better through group sharing sessions, facilitated by the spiritual conversation process.

The MCYPA, scheduled for

March 31 to April 5, 2025, at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Kota Kinabalu, aims to unite clergy, religious, and laity under the theme *The Catholic Church in Malaysia coming together as Clergy, Religious and Laity to Celebrate, Listen and Walk in the Light of the Lord*.

This event will feature five co-hosting parishes: St Michael, Penampang, Holy Trinity, Terawi, St Catherine, Inaman, a combination of Stella Maris, Tanjung Aru and St Thomas, Kepyau and a combination of the Church of Mary Immaculate, Kota Kinabalu and St Paul, Dontozidon) to carry out the programme and division of adoptive families.

MCYMC members have visited all selected venues to ensure preparedness for the programme. This comprehensive approach reflects a commitment to youth involvement, spiritual growth, and unity within the Catholic community in Malaysia.

## AN EMPOWERING JOURNEY

PORT DICKSON: In the tranquil embrace of PD Methodist Centre, 61 confirmands embarked on a soul-stirring journey from Friday, May 24 to Sunday, May 26.

Guided by the Alpha curriculum, the camp unfurled a tapestry of discussions, reflections, and introspections. Each session reverberated with vibrant exchange as confirmands delved into the core of their beliefs, guided by thought-provoking questions.

Led by a dedicated team of catechists and camp facilitators, the atmosphere during the Inner Healing on Saturday night became a sanctuary for releasing pent-up hurts and emotions. Through the power of prayer and communal support, confirmands underwent profound transformations, experiencing a cathartic release and newfound emotional wholeness.

Sunday began with Mass presided over by parish priest, Fr Raymond Pereira. After breakfast, the session on the Infilling

of the Holy Spirit ensued, igniting the hearts of the confirmands with fervent zeal and divine inspiration. The palpable excitement and energy radiated from their faces, a testament to the impact of the weekend's proceedings.

As the camp drew to a close, everyone donned their camp t-shirts and gathered for a group photograph.

The Confirmation camp was a powerful experience that strengthened faith and community bonds. As the confirmands left, they took with them a lasting impact, ready to embrace their spiritual journey with confidence. The camp not only deepened their faith but also created lasting connections with peers and mentors. For the catechists and facilitators, seeing these bonds form was a reminder of the importance of community. The camp laid the foundation for a lifelong support network, ensuring they never feel alone. — *By Bridget Antoinette Pereira*



Confirmands with Fr Raymond Pereira and catechists.

### Roney Alfred

Continued from Page 16

During the congress, I attended many enlightening sessions, faith formation workshops, informative talks, group discussions, dialogues, and conversations that greatly inspired me, especially in my service to the youth.

One of the sessions that touched me was *New Methods for New Times*, where the presenter emphasised the importance of silence and listening through the method of 'Spiritual Conversation.' It was stressed that it is important to pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance before and during the implementation of 'Spiritual Conversation.'

Additionally, the session on *The Reality of Today's Youth* made me more aware of the current situation of youth, especially after the pandemic.

The *Youth Leadership - Synodal and Missionary* session prompted me to reflect on the *Kerygma*, which is "God loves us," "Christ saves us," and "Jesus lives" (CV112-130). As youth leaders, we must be led by the Holy



Spirit, be faithful in personal prayer, practice reflection, and encourage the charisms of others.

The opportunity to hear Archbishop Peter Soon's experiences from South Korea, sharing strategies, resources, challenges, and preparations for the implementation of WYD Seoul 2027, inspired and strengthened me in

organising the 6th Sabah Youth Day (SYD6) in September in the Diocese of Keningau. As the coordinator of SYD6, many things need to be prepared and given attention to ensure everything goes well according to God's will.

On the fourth day, an audience was held with Pope Francis where he delivered his message to all delegates in a formal setting. Previously, I had only seen Pope Francis from afar during World Youth Day 2016 in Poland and World Youth Day 2023 in Portugal, and it never crossed my mind that I would get to greet him. However, it felt like a miracle when after his speech, we were invited to line up to meet Pope Francis. While waiting in line, I was worried that

Pope Francis might feel tired and leave the room before it was my turn. But, thank God, when my turn came, Pope Francis welcomed me with his sweet smile, and I shook hands with him, introduced myself, and asked for his prayers. Then, I hugged Pope Francis, and at that moment, I felt peace, tranquillity, and happiness in my heart. How fortunate I am as an ordinary person to be able to greet, converse, and hug Pope Francis. This is truly a memory that I will never forget for the rest of my life.

Attending the International Youth Ministry Congress was a priceless experience that brought joy and strengthened my faith, giving me renewed enthusiasm in youth ministry. What I gained from this congress will be shared with the youth I encounter, whether in sharing sessions or daily conversations. God bless.



..with Fr Franco Galdino, the new Youth Director for Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life.



The delegates with the Dicastery of Laity and Family Life at the end of the congress.



MEMORIAM

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

10th Year in loving memory of



**Thevadas William**  
4/2/1958 – 17/6/2014

*"It's been 10 years and memories with you are our timeless treasures. In our thoughts, In our hearts, In every part of our lives, You're always with us and always will be. We love you. Till we meet again."*

Memorial masses are being offered on 17th June 2024 at Church of Visitation, Seremban & Minor Basilica of St. Anne, Bukit Mertajam.

Forever loved by: Jessica Francis, Kristina Anne, Stephanie Ann, Adelin Ann & loved ones.

# 7th Year Memorial



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



*We know you can hear us  
way up in heaven  
because we talk  
through our hearts.*



*Dear Papa in heaven  
we miss you everyday  
and we know you miss us too.*

## Augustine Peter

Was called home to be with the Lord  
on 19 June 2017

*Absolve, we beseech thee O Lord, the soul of thy faithful servant, Augustine Peter, from every bond of sin that in the glory of thy resurrection, he may rise to a new and better life with thy Saints. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

*Dearly missed and fondly cherished by beloved*

**Wife:** Rosa Peter

**Sons:**

Dato' Frances Peter    Jaditsin Peter  
William Peter

**Daughters:**

Matilda Peter    Mary Rose Peter  
Thessa Peter    Flori Peter

Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives & friends.



**22nd Anniversary**  
**Mr C Anthony**  
**PPN, BM**  
**Rest in peace:**  
**15-06-2002**

*May the winds of Heaven  
blow softly and whisper in your ear  
How much we love and miss you  
and wish that you were here.*

**We have never stopped loving  
and missing you.**  
**Your family**



**8th Year Anniversary**  
**In Loving Memory Of**  
**THOMAS**  
**VICTOR ARUL**

From the Lord:  
27th October, 1936  
To the Lord:  
19th June, 2016

*You are missed each and every day,  
For you were someone special  
Who meant more than words can say.*

**We love and miss you dearly.**

Forever loved and dearly missed by:  
**Loving wife:** Rosaline Jaya Seely,  
**Son:** Jerome Dennis Victor,  
**Daughter:** Jennifer Linda Victor

## Stephen James Murugasu



**17TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**26th June 2007**

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

**Forever Missed, Forever Loved.**  
*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.  
Let your perpetual light shine upon  
him. May his soul rest in peace.*

## 6th Anniversary In Ever Loving Memory of Anthony Francis



From the Lord:  
23 December 1958  
To the Lord:  
21 June 2018

*"Blessed are the pure in  
heart for they shall see  
God" Matthew 5:8*

Dearly missed and  
forever in our hearts,  
Wife, Daughter, Son,  
Son-in-law and loved ones.

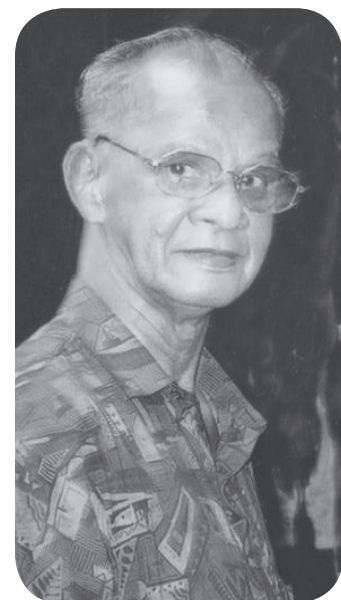
## 11th Anniversary In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Mother



**MARY ANTOINETTE HENDRY**  
**Returned to the Lord on the 21st of June 2013**

O God, Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the soul of Mary Antoinette, whose anniversary we commemorate this year, a place of refreshment, the blessedness of rest, and the splendor of Your light.

Deeply missed and always remembered by  
your daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends.





# World's biggest monstrance leads yearly procession

VALENCIA, Spain: The annual *Corpus Christi* procession in Valencia took place with a deep sense of tradition and symbolism, highlighting the historical significance of reparation. At the centre of this event is the world's largest processional monstrance, created as an act of reparation for the atrocities committed during the Spanish Civil War.

The Spanish Civil War, which raged from 1936 to 1939, saw the violent deaths of thousands of priests, nuns, and laypeople. While 11 have been canonised, over 2,000 have been beatified, with causes for another 2,000-plus underway. In April, the Pope recognised the martyrdom of two more individuals — a priest and a father of 11 — reflecting ongoing efforts to honour the victims of this brutal period.

The war also led to the loss of significant religious and artistic treasures, including the original monstrance used in Valencia's *Corpus Christi* procession. The procession, an ancient tradition dating back to 1355, had its first annual celebration in 1372, following Pope Urban IV's declaration in 1264 to make the feast universal for the Church.

In the tumultuous post-war years, economic

struggles loomed large. Yet, Jesuit priest Fr Antonio de León proposed to Archbishop Prudencio Melo the creation of a new monstrance. Despite initial doubts due to financial constraints, a symbolic donation of five silver coins from a labourer spurred the project forward. Valencian citizens, both poor and wealthy, contributed to the cause.

Completed in 1954, the new monstrance is a grand structure over 13 feet tall and 7 feet wide, composed of 1,300 pounds of silver, 18 pounds of gold, and hundreds of precious stones and pearls. Despite its opulence, Archbishop Melo named it the "Monstrance of the Poor," acknowledging the modest contributions that made its creation possible. The monstrance is adorned with 159 sculptures, depicting biblical scenes, saints, and Eucharistic miracles, with the Virgin of the Forsaken, Valencia's patroness, presiding over the entire structure.

Typically housed in the cathedral's museum, the monstrance takes centre stage during the *Corpus Christi* procession, exemplifying the community's devotion as it makes its way through Valencia's streets. Carlos Sancho,

a faithful participant since his youth, reminisced about the labourer's coins embedded in the monstrance, symbolising that it could never be sold as the money would have to be returned to the donors.

The procession itself is a vivid catechesis, featuring figures representing virtue, biblical stories, saints, and significant religious symbols. A striking highlight is the group of elders from the Book of Revelation, carrying 35-pound candles and signalling the imminent arrival of Jesus. As vested priests and sacristans create a cloud of incense, flower petals rain down on the monstrance from balconies, welcoming Christ's presence.

Last month, Pope Francis reflected on the 350th anniversary of Jesus' apparitions to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, emphasising the importance of acts of reparation. He described reparation as a "beautiful practice," vital for consoling wounded hearts, a sentiment echoed in the significance of Valencia's monstrance.

While Spain suffered the unspeakable during its civil war, the Monstrance of the Poor is both a reparation to the heart of Christ and a consolation for those few who can remember



There are 159 sculptures adorning the monstrance used in the annual "Corpus Christi" procession in Valencia, Spain, including biblical scenes from the Old Testament up to the Good Shepherd and the risen Christ. The Apostles and doctors of the Church adorn the host, and Eucharistic miracles are depicted. Saints particularly devoted to the Eucharist are part of the multitude of adorers, as is Pope Pius X, known as the "pope of the Eucharist" since he encouraged frequent reception of the sacrament and lowered the age for first Communion. June 2, 2024. (CNA photo/Archivalencia/Catedral VLC)

how it came about and can still take their place to adore Jesus as He passes by each year in Valencia. — CNA

## Thousands gather for *Corpus Christi* worship concerts



*Corpus Christi* concert in Rzeszow, Poland. (Tadeusz Pozniak)

RZESZÓW, Poland: This year, the *One Heart, One Spirit* concert in Rzeszow brought together over 25,000 people from across Poland and other European countries on the feast of *Corpus Christi*.

As the organisers stress, "the concert is a form of prayer, and Christ is the most important. It gathers so many people to worship together on-site and through television, radio, and Internet broadcasts."

Broadcasts and media coverage of the event reached millions of people in Poland and around the world.

The *One Heart, One Spirit* orchestra and choir accompanied the concert performers, including nearly 200 choristers and soloists, as well as instrumentalists and volunteers.

Participants of the concert enjoyed 26 songs and religious pieces for three hours.

Fr Andrzej Cypriś, one of the organisers of the concert, Marcin Pospieszalski, music director, and Jan Budziaszek, the MC, welcomed all gathered for the 22nd edition of the "One Heart, One Spirit" concert.

Bishop Jan Wątroba, of the Diocese of Rzeszów, gave his blessing at the end.

Worship concerts on the day of *Corpus Christi* are becoming more and more popular in Poland, both in large cities and small towns.

They also impact the media, with many people posting reports of the concert on social media. Many attendees are young people and young couples. — By Fr Pawel Rytel-Andrianik and Fr Jakub Nagi, *Vatican News*

## Millions celebrate Uganda Martyrs Day

UGANDA: At the Catholic Shrine of the Uganda Martyrs in Namugongo, 16 kilometres northwest of Kampala, Uganda's capital, the traditional pilgrimage held on June 3 saw a massive turnout, with local authorities estimating more than 3.5 million attendees. Pilgrims came from various dioceses across the country, as well as from numerous African countries, Europe, and America.

For Archbishop Raphael p'Mony Wokorach of Gulu (north), who presided over the Mass, this celebration is "very important for Ugandan Christians and the Church as a whole." He compared it to a new Pentecost, a moment where people from all corners of the world gather in prayer as one family of God, united in faith.

The archbishop urged the faithful to be inspired and transformed by the martyrs' testimony, whose courage should also inspire the country's authorities in the fight against corruption. In this East African country, ranked 140th out of 180 by the latest Transparency

International report, "corruption has now penetrated most sectors of society," noted Archbishop Wokorach.

As the guest of honour at the celebration, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni responded to this call. "Some of the speakers have talked about corruption. I agree that corruption is becoming a problem in Uganda, and when I address the state of the nation, I'll talk about it in detail," he promised before the millions of attendees.

While the event typically gathers millions of Catholic faithful, this year it had a special significance: the 60th anniversary of the canonisation of the Uganda martyrs, with the remains of two of them expected to be repatriated "probably in September this year." The year 2024 also marks 145 years of evangelisation in this country by the White Fathers.

The evangelisation of Buganda (southern present-day Uganda) began in 1879 with the arrival in Entebbe (former capital) of Simon

Lourdel and Léon Livinhac, two Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers). They were peacefully welcomed and received by King Mutesa, who allowed them to open a catechumenate, preparing a few locals for baptism. Frs Lourdel and Livinhac baptised a few catechumens and also children dying from a smallpox epidemic. They then left Entebbe from 1882 to 1885, already sensing the persecution.

Upon King Mutesa's death, his son Mwanga initially appeared favourable to Christianity and asked the missionaries to return after three years of exile. Assisted by new converts, notably Joseph Mukasa, the king's steward, the missionaries continued their evangelisation. However, their activities began to disturb the Prime Minister and local dignitaries. They eventually convinced the king that the Christians were plotting to overthrow him.

Joseph Mukasa was the first victim of King Mwanga's persecution of Catholics. He was beheaded, and his body burned on November

15, 1885. The tyrant hoped to discourage all new converts by killing their leader. But it was to no avail. The day after Joseph's martyrdom, 12 catechumens requested baptism, and 500 others were baptised that same week. Twenty-one of Joseph Mukasa's companions, including 12-year-old Kizito, were also killed for their faith.

In addition to the 22 Catholic martyrs, 23 Anglicans were killed during the same period. Like the Catholics, these Anglicans denounced King Mwanga's homosexual relationships with some of his pages and encouraged them to no longer submit to him. This fact was recalled by Cardinal Ambongo in January, justifying the refusal of African bishops to bless homosexual couples.

In Uganda, June 3 being a public holiday, Anglicans also organised a celebration for their martyrs in Namugongo, where they also have a shrine. — By Guy Aimé Eblotié, *LCI* (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)