

There will be no issue on
May 31, 2026.
Our next issue
will be on June 7, 2026.



Prayer for the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026)

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

Guide us as we prepare for
the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026.

Teach us to listen deeply,
to discern faithfully,
and to trust where You are leading us.

We place before You the four areas we
are discerning together.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Pentecost journey for Malaysia



Patricia Pereira

KUALA LUMPUR: Over 2,000 years ago, frightened disciples huddled behind closed doors, uncertain of the future and unsure of their mission. Then came Pentecost, the moment the Holy Spirit descended like wind and fire, transforming fear into courage and a scattered group into a missionary Church.

Pentecost was never meant to be remembered merely as a dramatic event in salvation history. It is an invitation continually renewed in every generation. The Spirit still calls the Church to leave behind fear, complacency, division and isolation, and to journey together as one people of God.

Perhaps this is why the Malaysian Church's present journey towards the Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC2026) feels deeply Pentecostal in spirit.

Across the country, from bustling cities to remote villages, the Church in Malaysia has been walking a long road of listening, prayer, discernment and communion. What began years ago as discussions among bishops and pastoral leaders has slowly unfolded into a nationwide synodal journey involving clergy, religious and laity at every level. Parish Pastoral Assemblies, Diocesan Pastoral Assemblies and Regional Pastoral Assemblies have all become part of this pilgrimage towards MPC2026, which will culminate in September this year.

Yet perhaps nothing symbolises this journey more beautifully than the *Perjalanan Salib* — the "Journey of the Cross."

Launched during the Malaysian Catholic Youth Day in Kota Kinabalu in April 2025, nine crosses representing the nine dioceses of Malaysia were blessed and sent forth across the nation. Over an 18-month pilgrimage, these crosses travel from parish to parish, reaching even the peripheries, gathering the prayers, hopes, anxieties and struggles of the faithful before finally being reunited as one at MPC2026.

It is difficult not to see Pentecost reflected in this image.

The Holy Spirit has always moved the Church outward — beyond comfort zones, beyond walls, beyond the temptation to become inward-looking. At Pentecost, the apostles did not remain in the Upper Room. They were sent forth. In the same way, the *Perjalanan Salib* does not remain fixed in cathedrals or centres of influence. It journeys among ordinary people — families, youth, migrants, the elderly, indigenous communities and those living at the margins.

This is not merely organisational planning for another Church gathering. It is a spiritual movement.

The Malaysian Church is slowly rediscovering what it means to become a synodal Church — a Church that listens before it speaks, accompanies before it instructs, and walks together rather than allowing only a few to decide the future for everyone else. The journey towards MPC2026 revolves around four key areas of concern — Church, Family, Society and Ecology — reminding Catholics that faith can never remain detached from the realities of daily life.

Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit rarely works through noise and spectacle alone. More often, the Spirit works quietly

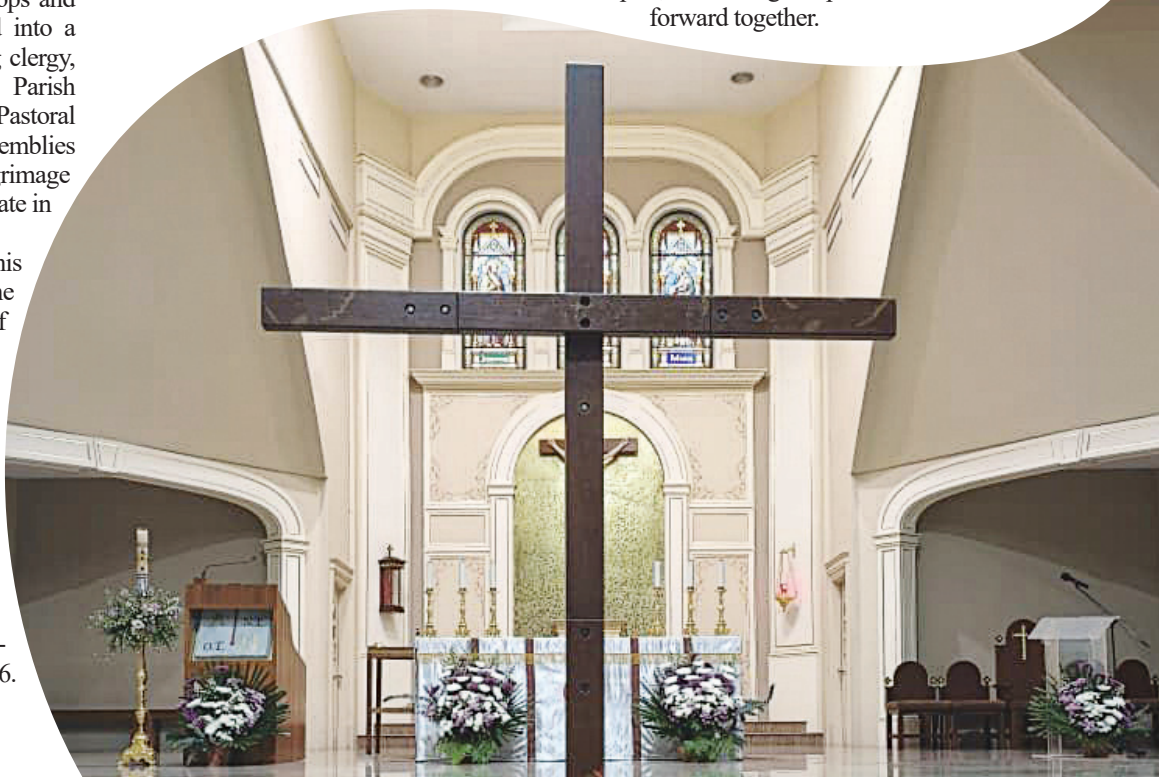
through encounter, dialogue, repentance, reconciliation and courage. The Spirit forms communion among people who are different from one another.

Malaysia itself reflects that diversity. The Catholic Church here speaks many languages, carries many cultures and worships through different traditions, yet remains one Body in Christ. The image of the nine *salibs* eventually reuniting into one crucifix at MPC2026, therefore, becomes a powerful expression of the Church Malaysia is called to become — diverse yet united, wounded yet hopeful, local yet universal.

But Pentecost also carries a challenge. The disciples were not given the Holy Spirit merely for personal comfort or spiritual excitement. They were empowered for the mission. Likewise, the journey towards MPC2026 cannot end as another beautiful event filled with speeches, documents and photographs. If the Spirit is truly guiding this journey, then it must lead to renewal — renewed faith, renewed participation, renewed compassion, renewed evangelisation, renewed courage to engage society and renewed commitment to becoming a more listening and missionary Church.

The Spirit who descended at Pentecost is still moving.

The question is whether we, like the first disciples, are willing to open the doors and walk forward together.



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**EDITOR**

Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Sandra Ann Inbaraj
sandra@herald.com.my

**JOURNALIST**

Christina Lazaroo
christina@herald.com.my

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Kevin Francis
kevin@herald.com.my

**BAHASA MALAYSIA**

Melania Liza Magnus
liza@herald.com.my

**MANDARIN**

Adelina Wong
yin4482@gmail.com

**TAMIL**

Perzeus James
tamil@herald.com.my

**ADMIN ASSISTANT**

Rachael Sharma
admin@herald.com.my

ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

Social Media

www.heraldmalaysia.com



@heraldmalaysia



heraldmalaysia
Herald Snapshot



@heraldsnapshot

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When love needs a law

There was once a time when ageing parents rarely feared loneliness.

Not because life was easier then. It was not. Families struggled through poverty, war, uncertainty, and sacrifice. But amid all those hardships, there remained an unspoken understanding — parents would not be abandoned in their twilight years. They would grow old surrounded by family, grandchildren, conversation, noise, and love.

Today, that certainty no longer feels guaranteed.

Malaysia's proposal to introduce a law making the care of elderly parents a legal responsibility of their children has therefore struck a deeply emotional chord within society. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi recently announced that the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry has been tasked with drafting the proposed legislation within six months before it is tabled to the Cabinet for approval. The move comes amid growing concern over cases of elderly parents being abandoned in hospitals, left in nursing homes without visits, or neglected emotionally and financially.

Yet, beneath the legal debate lies a more troubling question: Have we become a society that now needs laws to remind us to love our parents?

From a Christian perspective, caring for elderly parents is not merely a cultural expectation or social obligation. It is a sacred responsibility rooted in the Fourth Commandment: "Honour your father and your mother." Those who once cared for us in our helplessness deserve dignity, tenderness, and companionship when they themselves become weak and vulnerable.

For generations, respect for parents and elders formed part of the moral heartbeat of Asian societies. Elderly parents remained at the centre of family life — cared for, consulted, and cherished. But modern life has quietly changed

those rhythms. Urban migration separates families across cities and countries. Economic pressures force many into exhausting work schedules simply to survive. Young adults struggle with rising living costs, housing loans, education expenses, and caring for their own children, while people are also living longer and often require years of medical and emotional support.

Many families today are therefore not unwilling to care for ageing parents. They are overwhelmed.

This reality makes the issue far more complex than simply accusing children of selfishness or neglect. Some adult children are already carrying enormous financial and emotional burdens. Others come from painful family histories marked by abuse, abandonment, or neglect. The safeguards being considered within the proposed law are, therefore, necessary and compassionate.

Still, while legislation may create accountability, it cannot create love. A law may compel financial support, but it cannot compel affection. A law may punish abandonment, but it cannot heal broken relationships. A law may require visits, but it cannot create genuine presence or tenderness.

This is where the Church must speak not only about obligation, but about conversion of heart. The late Pope Francis repeatedly warned against the "throwaway culture" — a society that discards whatever is no longer considered useful or productive. The elderly can easily become its quiet victims. In a world obsessed with youth, speed, and achievement, old age is sometimes viewed as an inconvenience rather than a blessing.

Yet Scripture presents ageing very differently. The elderly are living witnesses of sacrifice, endurance, wisdom, and faith. Wrinkled hands often hold stories of hardship and sacrifice that younger generations may never fully

understand.

Some parents denied themselves comfort so their children could study. Some worked tirelessly for decades so their families could survive. Some silently carried exhaustion and worry simply to provide a better future for their children.

How heartbreaking it is when the very people who once taught their children to walk must now wonder whether anyone will walk beside them in old age.

At the same time, the Church must acknowledge that families cannot shoulder these burdens alone. If society truly values its elderly, then meaningful support systems must accompany such legislation. Affordable eldercare services, accessible healthcare, caregiver assistance, flexible work arrangements, and stronger community support systems are not luxuries. They are acts of justice and compassion.

Parishes too have a role to play. Many elderly persons suffer not only from financial insecurity, but from profound loneliness. Some spend entire days waiting for a phone call that never comes. Others attend Mass longing not only for Holy Communion, but for simple human companionship. The Church must become a place where the elderly are seen, visited, listened to, and loved.

Perhaps the true measure of a society is not found in its skyscrapers or economic achievements, but in how it treats those who can no longer contribute "productively" to society.

Because one day, if we are blessed with long life, all of us will stand where our elderly now stand.

And perhaps the question we must ask ourselves is not simply whether the law should compel children to care for ageing parents, but whether our hearts still remember why they should.

Patricia Pereira

The fire that still burns

The Solemnity of Pentecost celebrates the fulfilment of Christ's promise: the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the birth of the Church. Fifty days after Easter, the frightened disciples who once hid behind locked doors were transformed into courageous witnesses of the Gospel. Pentecost is not only a historical event remembered by the Church; it is a living reality that continues whenever believers open their hearts to the Spirit of God.

Before Pentecost, the Apostles were hesitant and afraid. Peter, who once denied Jesus three times, now boldly proclaims Christ before the crowds. The Spirit gives them courage, wisdom, and unity. People from many nations hear the Gospel proclaimed in their own languages. This miracle is deeply symbolic. Sin had once divided humanity at Babel, causing confusion and separation. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit reverses that division by creating unity amid diversity. The Church becomes universal, embracing all peoples and cultures.

The Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of Jesus among His people. Jesus says, "I will come to you." Though He ascends to the Father, He remains with the Church through the Spirit. This means that Christianity is not simply following the memory of a great teacher from the past. It is a living relationship with the risen Christ who continues to guide, strengthen, and sanctify His people today.

The Gospel also reminds us that "the world cannot accept" the Spirit because it neither sees nor knows Him. The Spirit is recognised not

through worldly power or success, but through faith, prayer, and openness to God. In today's world, many people search for meaning in achievement, possessions, or popularity, yet still feel empty. Pentecost reminds us that only the Holy Spirit can truly satisfy the deepest longing of the human heart. The Spirit brings peace, wisdom, joy, and purpose.

Jesus tells His disciples that they know the Holy Spirit since He is in them. This is why all of us can recognise the Spirit when He comes because we have all received Him at Baptism and confirmed in the Sacrament of Confirmation. This knowledge goes deeper than mere head knowledge. It goes down to the deepest part of our soul. This is what separates us from the rest of the world.

Another important theme is courage in mission. The Apostles did not receive the Spirit merely for their own comfort. They were empowered to go out and proclaim the Gospel. Pentecost is therefore the birthday of missionary discipleship. Every baptised Christian receives the same Spirit and is called to witness to Christ in daily life. This witness may not always involve preaching publicly. Often it is shown through acts of kindness, forgiveness, honesty, compassion, and faithfulness. A person filled with the Holy Spirit reflects the presence of Christ to others.

Pentecost also challenges us to ask whether we are truly open to the Spirit's action. Sometimes fear, pride, resentment, or attachment to sin can close our hearts. Like the apostles before Pentecost, we may remain

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

Pentecost Sunday (A)

*Readings: Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11;
1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13;
Gospel: John 20:19-23*

trapped behind locked doors of anxiety or doubt. Yet the Holy Spirit continually invites us into freedom and renewal. Through prayer, the sacraments, Scripture, and community life, the Spirit transforms us little by little into the likeness of Christ.

The fire of Pentecost is meant to continue burning in the Church and in every believer. The saints throughout history are examples of people who allowed the Spirit to work powerfully through them. Their holiness did not come from their own strength but from surrender to God. The same Spirit who descended upon the Apostles is alive today, guiding the Church through every age.

As we celebrate Pentecost, we are invited to renew our openness to the Holy Spirit. Jesus has not left us orphaned. He remains with us through the Advocate, who teaches, strengthens, and leads us into truth. Pentecost is a reminder that the Church is alive because the Spirit is alive within her. May we welcome that Spirit with faith and courage, allowing the fire of God's love to transform our hearts so that we too may become joyful witnesses of the risen Christ in the world today.

St Anne's feast gains heritage status

Christopher Kushi

BUKIT MERTAJAM: In a historic recognition of one of Malaysia's oldest and largest Catholic pilgrimages, the Penang State Government on May 9 officially declared the Feast of St Anne an Intangible Cultural Heritage under the Penang State Heritage Enactment 2011, affirming the centuries-old celebration not only as a treasured expression of Catholic faith but also as an enduring symbol of unity, cultural diversity and communal harmony in Penang.

The declaration ceremony, officiated by Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow at Kampung Mengkuang Titi, Kubang Semang, marked a significant milestone for both the Catholic community and Penang's wider cultural heritage landscape.

During the ceremony, Deacon Lazarus Jonathan, Finance and Administrator of the Minor Basilica of St Anne, together with Sr Mercie Lai of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM), received the official declaration certificate and plaque on behalf of Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Catholics in Penang, and the thousands of pilgrims who journey annually to St Anne's.

Deacon Lazarus expressed gratitude to the Penang State Government for the recognition, describing the Feast of St Anne as a living tradition that continues to inspire devotion, foster unity, and enrich Penang's cultural identity across generations.

The veneration of St Anne in the Catholic



Deacon Lazarus Jonathan receiving the Declaration Certificate and Plaque from Penang Chief Minister, Chow Kon Yeow.

Church began in Jerusalem around 550AD before spreading to France. In Brittany, devotion to St Anne — the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus — grew significantly after 1624, when a man named Yvon Nikolazic discovered an intact statue of St Anne among the ruins of a chapel destroyed in 700 AD. This became the origin of Sainte-Anne-d'Auray in Brittany, France, from where the devotion eventually made its way to Malaya in 1846.

The Novena and Feast of St Anne is celebrated annually over 10 days every July at the Sanctuary of St Anne, encompassing the Shrine of Harmony and the Minor Basilica of St Anne. This year's celebration will take place from July 17 to 26 with the theme *Walking Together with Saint Anne*. The celebration will also feature a healing rally on July 25, as well as opportunities for personal prayer requests, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and counselling services.

The Feast of St Anne is deeply rooted in

Penang's Catholic history. In 1840, Chinese Catholics settled at the foothills of Bukit Mertajam, working in farms and orchards. Six years later, Fr Adolphe Couellan MEP built the first chapel atop the hill, while baptism records from the same year marked the formal establishment of the parish.

In 1865, Fr Maistre MEP constructed a larger chapel to accommodate the growing Catholic population, and its foundation stones still remain behind the present St Anne's Water Fountain. Fr Allard became the first resident priest in 1869, while in 1888 Fr Sorin MEP built the present Shrine of St Anne and was later buried within its main aisle.

The parish's first local priest, Fr Michael Seet, who served from 1914 to 1938, played a pivotal role in expanding the annual feast celebration, drawing Catholics from other states and laying the foundation for what would eventually become one of the region's major pilgrimage

events.

In 2002, Fr Michael Cheah oversaw the completion of the new Church of St Anne. Built in the shape of a Greek cross, the Minor Basilica incorporates elements of local inculturation through its blend of traditional architecture, with Gothic arches and corridors. Its distinctive three-tiered Minangkabau-inspired roof symbolises the Holy Trinity — the Father, Son and Holy Spirit — while the tabernacle was designed in the form of a traditional *kampung* house. Constructed entirely with clay-face bricks, the church was consecrated and dedicated to St Anne by Bishop Antony Selvanayagam on July 26, 2002.

On Sept 5, 2019, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome elevated the Church of St Anne to the status of Minor Basilica through Decree Protocol No. 42/19, signifying its bond with the Church in Rome and its importance as a centre of pilgrimage.

However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the solemn proclamation ceremony was only held on Jan 9, 2023.

Today, the Feast of St Anne draws an estimated 200,000 pilgrims annually from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and beyond. Renowned for its multilingual liturgies and strong spirit of inclusivity, the feast continues to stand as a powerful witness to how faith, culture and community can converge across generations and borders.

KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

May

17-25 Ad Limina Visit to Rome

PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

May & June

16-27 Ad Limina Visit to Rome

24 Mass – Pentecost & Confirmation at Parrocchia Santa Maria Causa Nostrae Laetitiae, Roma

2/6 Meeting – Bro Patrick Hilary Sandnasamy, Seminarian Theology Year 5 at Bishop's Office

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

May & June

17-25 Ad Limina Visit to Rome

4-5/6 Caritas Malaysia Strategic Planning Retreat – MAJODI Centre

6/6 Diocesan Pastoral Council Assembly – Church of St Louis, Kluang

Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #272

Welcome dear friends,

The 11 bishops of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (CBCMSB) will be in **Rome from May 17 - 24** to meet the dicasteries and Pope Leo XIV. It is a time to report, be updated and rekindle the spirit of communion, participation and mission. Then the bishops will meet up with the Malaysians in Rome and the Malaysian Ambassador to the Vatican. *Ad Limina* means every five years. The last audience was with the late Pope Francis.

Local Takes:
Need for More Awareness, Acknowledgement and Action.
 The Sultan of Selangor quoted: "No one can get rich in politics unless he is a crook." "If the wealthiest people in a society are its politicians, that society is fundamentally corrupt," as **a moral reflection for Malaysians**, on the dangers of corruption in politics and the importance of maintaining integrity in leadership and public administration.
 A community leader warned of **scare tactics**, ghost stories to cover up failures and bankruptcy of policy solutions.
 An academic commented "*Scholars who allow themselves to be used by politicians as their playthings, are detrimental to the country's progress.*"

Reading the Signs:
Making a Difference
Pope Leo marks his first year leading the Catholic Church on May 8 with a higher public profile, growing more outspoken on the world stage and drawing the ire of the US President Donald Trump. The first US-born pope, sharply denounced war and despotism

on a recent four-nation Africa tour, and is preparing for a one-week trip to Spain in June.
 A global study, **FOOTPRINT** reveals that young people of faith bring meaning, hope and civic engagement to the workplace. The often-overlooked factor — religious belief — significantly shapes how young people approach their professional lives, their responsibilities, and their role in society.

A Thought for the Week:
A bowl of noodles!
 Sue stormed out of the house after a quarrel with her mother. It was then that she remembered that she had no money. She was passing a noodle shop, when the fragrance made her hungry. How she wished for a bowl of noodles.
 The owner saw her gaze and asked: "Hey little girl, you want to eat a bowl?" She shyly replied that she had no money. The kind man said: "Come in! I will make you a bowl." A little later, a steaming bowl of noodles was brought to her.
 After a few bites, Sue began to cry. When asked, she said that she was touched by his kindness. Wiping her tears, she said: "A stranger on the street gives me noodles. My mother chased me out of the house after a quarrel. She is cruel." The noodle shop owner sighed: "*Think again! I gave you a bowl of noodles and you are so grateful. Your mother raised you since you were little and you are so thankless.*"
 She was taken aback: "I never thought of it. Indebted to a stranger but never felt so to my mum." She decided to go home, and was thinking what to say. At the doorstep was her mother, worried and tired. She had looked for Sue everywhere. Seeing Sue, the mother gently said: "Come in, honey. You must be hungry. The meal is ready. Come and eat

while it is still hot." Sue could not hold back the tears. She clung to her mum and cried.
A lesson from a stranger: Do not take for granted the deeds of those close to us. See their sacrifices.

QnQ? Q asks? Brave? Courage? Vulnerable? Are they compatible?
"There is no courage without vulnerability. Vulnerability is how we are brave with our lives." (Brené Brown).
Real courage shows up with trembling hands, unanswered questions, and the risk of being seen, it's the doorway to bravery. Psychologically, **vulnerability** is exposure to emotional risk — rejection, failure, disappointment. Our brain is wired to avoid exactly that.
 So, when we choose to speak honestly, love openly, or step forward without guarantees, feeling uncertain, we're not lacking courage—we're practising it in its purest form.
 There's also a deeper spiritual layer here: vulnerability is an act of trust. It says, "**I will show up as I am, not as I wish I were.**" And that kind of honesty — before others, before God, before yourself — is where transformation begins.
 Where in your life are you waiting to feel "ready" before you act, when **in truth, courage is simply asking you to show up as you are?**

The Spirit @ Work: "The Holy Spirit is a divine guest of our soul... He transforms us into His dwelling." *St John Vianney*

Something to tickle you: "Jesus Christ did not come into this world to make bad people good; He came into this world to make dead people live." *Lee Strobel*

Bishop Bernard Paul

Discovering Mary's joy amid sorrows

IPOH: During the month of May, which is dedicated to Mary, many activities are organised at parish level to honour Mary, the Mother of God. At the Church of St Michael, the well-known speaker and faith formator, Martin Jalleh, *pic*, conducted an hour-long session for more than 100 parishioners on May 12. His talk entitled 'Mary the Disciple and Handmaid of Joy', invited participants to reflect more deeply on Mary's life and witness.

Martin began by pointing out that Mary is often associated with sorrow because of the many sufferings she endured, especially as she witnessed the passion and death of her Son. Yet, despite her pain and struggles, Mary was also a woman of profound joy. Her life was marked by unwavering hope and trust in God — virtues that all Christians are called to imitate. Martin encouraged all present to use Mary as a role model and become living witnesses of the joy of the Lord.

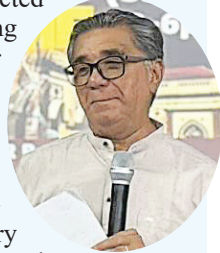
One parishioner, Irene Ho, remarked, "I have often heard of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, but I never knew there was also Our Lady of Seven Joys."

Throughout the session, Martin posed several thought-provoking questions that challenged participants to reflect on their own faith journey. Among them were: "What would have happened if Mary had not given her 'Yes'?", "Have you encountered the joy of the Lord as Mary did?" and "If you worship the God of Joy, why are you not joyful?"

Martin also shared several inspiring quotations from Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). One quote that resonated strongly with many participants was: "True joy comes from doing God's will."

In conjunction with the parish's mission focus "Discipleship through Sanctification, Mission and Community," Martin concluded by reminding everyone that "joy is the net of love by which one can catch souls."

Indeed, Mary remains a shining example of one who embraced God's will wholeheartedly and radiated His joy to the world. **Jennifer Duarte**



Cathedral celebrates Pope Leo XIV, bids Nuncio farewell



YB Arthur Joseph Kurup, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability at the reception celebrating Pope Leo XIV's first anniversary hosted by His Excellency Wojciech Zaluski, March 8, 2026 in Kuala Lumpur. (Arthur Joseph Kurup facebook)

Tianne Pereira

KUALA LUMPUR: Clergy, religious and faithful gathered at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist on May 10 for a special Mass celebrating the first anniversary of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, while also bidding farewell to the Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, who will soon take up a new appointment in Malta.

The celebration was graced by the presence of Archbishop Julian Leow, Archbishop Simon Poh, Fr Lawrence Andrew SJ, and cathedral parish priest, Fr Gerard Theraviam. The occasion also coincided with Mother's Day, adding a special significance to the gathering.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian reflected on faith, the mission of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He said miracles during the time of Jesus helped people recognise who Christ truly was, while His Resurrection and the witness of the apostles ensured that the truth of the Gospel would be handed down through generations.

PAPAR: In conjunction with the 800th Franciscan Jubilee celebration, members of the Franciscan Family in Sabah recently came together for a day of spiritual formation, pilgrimage, and fellowship.

The one-day programme, held at the Pace Bene Retreat Centre, gathered representatives from the different branches of the Franciscan Family, namely the First Order, the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), the Second Order, the Poor Clares, the Third Order Religious, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (FSIC), and the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS).

The formation was conducted by Friar Gerald Saimel OFM of the First Order, who reflected on the Franciscan identity and spirituality within the context of contemporary life.

One of the key highlights was the examination of conscience, which encouraged participants to reflect honestly before God, renew their hearts, and deepen their spiritual journey by following the example of St Francis of Assisi.

The session was followed by a

Today, he said, the Church possesses the fullness of that revelation through Scripture, the Creed and the teachings of the Church. Referring to the Gospel, he reminded the faithful that Christians are called to believe even without seeing. Quoting Jesus' words, "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe," Archbishop Julian stressed that faith is rooted not in complete understanding but in trusting what God has revealed.

Reflecting on the Easter season, he explained that Christ came to reconcile humanity to God through His suffering, death and Resurrection, a reconciliation that continues through the Eucharist and priesthood. He reminded the congregation that Christ remains present in every tabernacle throughout the world.

The archbishop also spoke on the gift of the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide the Church, especially as the faithful prepare for Pentecost. He encouraged Catholics to live out their faith through love and service while remaining grateful for the witness of the saints, martyrs, the



Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski flanked by Archbishops Julian Leow and Simon Poh with Frs Gerard Theraviam and Lawrence Andrew SJ.

Blessed Virgin Mary and the unbroken succession of Popes from St Peter to Pope Leo XIV. He also invited prayers for Pope Leo, Church leaders, BEC leaders, ministry heads and mothers who quietly sustain many ministries within the Church.

Speaking at the end of the celebration, Archbishop Wojciech thanked the archbishops and Archbishop Julian for the invitation to celebrate the occasion. Reflecting on the election of Pope Leo XIV a year ago, he described the election of a Pope as ultimately a mystery guided by the Holy Spirit and by Christ Himself.

Referring to Jesus asking Peter three times, "Do you love me?", the nuncio said the same call continues through every successor of Peter. He also noted that Pope Leo XIV's choice of name may have been inspired by Pope Leo XIII, remembered for courageously responding to the challenges of his era.

Recalling Pope Leo XIV's first appearance after his election, the nuncio quoted the Holy Father's words from St Augustine: "For you I am a bishop, with you I am

a Christian," describing it as a reflection of the Pope's closeness and spirit of accompaniment.

In a heartfelt moment, Archbishop Wojciech shared that this would likely be his final such celebration in Kuala Lumpur. Reflecting on his five years in Malaysia, he expressed gratitude for the warmth and loyalty shown by Malaysian Catholics toward the successor of Peter. He also called for prayers for more priestly vocations, referencing the recent ordination of Fr Anthony Robert Peter and Fr Philip Asirwalam.

Archbishop Simon Poh, speaking warmly and humorously, said that while he did not claim to be one of the wise men from the East at Jesus' birth, he had come representing the people of East Malaysia for the celebration and farewell to the nuncio. He added that Pope Leo XIV continues the mission of Pope Francis in bringing hope, mercy and peace to the world.

The celebration concluded with a special prayer for Pope Leo XIV and a blessing for all mothers, bringing to a close a joyful gathering marked by faith, unity and thanksgiving.



Franciscan family in Sabah marks 800th jubilee with formation and fellowship

question-and-answer segment, allowing participants to gain a deeper understanding of the Franciscan vocation and spirituality.

The presence of the Poor Clare Sisters from the Diocese of Keningau further enriched the gathering as a visible sign of unity and communion within the Franciscan Family.

Besides the formation, participants also took part in a pilgrimage around Pace Bene and the Convent of St Mary of the Angels.

The pilgrimage reflected on the message that heaven is a place of communion rather than isolation, where people are continually called to love and care for one another.

"The presence of God is encountered not only in extraordinary experiences, but also amid the struggles and darkness of daily life," said Friar Gerald.

He emphasised that true protection and peace are found when people create space to communicate, listen, and love one another in the

spirit of fraternity.

The programme continued with the Mass at 6.00pm, presided over by Friar Gerald.

Then members of the four branches of the Franciscan Family gathered for a fellowship dinner.

The gathering not only strengthened the bonds of fraternity among the Franciscan Family in Sabah, but also renewed their commitment to live out the spirit of St Francis through Gospel values, pastoral service, and fraternity.

Two new priests for the Archdiocese of KL

Christina Lazaroo

KUALA LUMPUR: St John Vianney once said, "The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus," a quote that resonated deeply as the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur celebrated the ordination of two new priests on May 9 at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.

Fr Philip Asirwalam and Fr Anthony Robert Peter were ordained during a multilingual Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow. He was joined by Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching, and Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, the Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia. The celebration was graced by the presence of Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam, clergy from various dioceses, religious men and women, and parishioners from all over Malaysia.

The rite followed the sacred order of the Mass. Following the Gospel, the candidates were presented and elected, declaring their resolve to undertake the priestly office and promised obedience to their bishop and his successors. The central moment came with the "Laying of Hands." Archbishop Julian, followed by the concelebrating bishops and all priests present, imposed hands on the heads of Fr Philip and Fr Anthony, symbolising the conferral of the Holy Spirit, the transmission of spiritual authority, and the unity of the priesthood.

This was followed by the investiture with the stole and chasuble. Fr Anthony was vested by Fr Frederick Joseph, while Fr Philip was vested by Fr Christopher Soosaipillai. The newly ordained priests received the chalice and paten, signs of their ministry to celebrate the Eucharist, before joining the bishops at the altar to concelebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In his thanksgiving speech, Fr Philip expressed gratitude to God, his family, Archbishop Julian for accepting him into the seminary, the Apostolic Nuncio, and his formators from St Peter's College and College General. He fondly remembered the prisoners he visited during pastoral ministry, sharing how they had been encouraged to pray for both ordinands by Fr Clarence.

The congregation burst into laughter when he joked that he hoped Fr Vincent Thomas, who is currently in Rome, was "not lying on his bed watching but sitting up and watching the ordination online." He also thanked the parishes he served in, Fr George Harrison for his mentorship, and the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health, Kampung Pandan, where he grew up.

Fr Anthony reflected on his ordination theme from Revelation 21:5, *Behold I am making all things new*, describing how God had continuously renewed his life through joys and struggles, failures and hopes, doubts and courage. Fighting back tears, he remembered his late parents and brother, saying their sacrifices and faith nurtured his vocation. He recalled his father's words: "Be faithful to this calling, God is always faithful, and he has chosen you."

He then continued to thank the many priests, catechists, youth ministries, seminary formators, and fellow seminarians who accompanied him throughout his journey.

In his address, Archbishop Julian began humorously, saying, "You have all heard the litany of thanks," drawing laughter from the congregation. He then stressed that it takes a whole village to produce one priest and reminded the faithful that vocations are the responsibility of the whole Church in Malaysia.



Archbishop Julian Leow addressing the deacons.



The newly ordained priests join Archbishop Julian Leow during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Addressing the youth, Archbishop Julian challenged them to courageously consider the priesthood, asking if they were ready "to be a priest after the heart of Jesus." He reminded the congregation that carrying the cross faithfully means renewing one's faith and desire to serve, trusting that Christ remains with His people always.

He also announced that Fr Philip would

remain at the Church of Divine Mercy, Shah Alam, while Fr Anthony would continue serving at Christ the Light, Kepong, for the time being.

On 10 May, both newly ordained priests celebrated their first Thanksgiving Masses at their home parishes, St Jude Rawang and the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health respectively.

Joyous triple celebration at Kg Pandan chapel

KAMPUNG PANDAN: The Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health was filled with joy and thanksgiving on May 10 as the community gathered for a special "triple celebration" honouring Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam's 62nd sacerdotal anniversary, the first Mass of newly ordained Fr Philip Asirwalam, and Mother's Day.

The celebration marked more than six decades since Archbishop Emeritus Pakiam's priestly ordination on May 10,

1964. At 87, he remains the longest-serving priest in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and was among the concelebrants at the evening Mass.

The occasion was made even more meaningful with the first Mass celebrated by newly ordained Fr Philip Asirwalam, a son of the Kampung Pandan chapel community under the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jalan Peel. He is the second priest produced by the nearly 72-year-old chapel

after the late Fr Mari Arokiam.

Joining him at the altar was fellow newly ordained priest Fr Anthony Robert Peter, together with eight other concelebrating priests.

In his homily, Fr Philip reflected on love for God and openness to the Holy Spirit. Referring to Jesus' question to Peter, "Do you love Me?", he invited the faithful to deepen their love for Christ by loving others and returning to God in repentance. He reminded the congregation that God looks at the heart and continues to pour out His mercy and grace despite human weakness and sinfulness.

The celebration also coincided with Mother's Day. After Mass, mothers and grandmothers were invited forward for a special prayer led by Fr Philip, while both newly ordained priests blessed them with holy water in recognition of motherhood as a sacred vocation reflecting God's nurturing love and the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Chapel chairperson Stephen Arokiasamy congratulated the newly ordained priests and paid tribute to Archbishop Emeritus Pakiam on his sacerdotal anniversary. He described Fr Philip, affectionately known as their "Kampung boy", as a blessing to the community for answering God's call to the priesthood. He also recalled how Fr Anthony had touched many lives during his pastoral placement at the parish in 2020.

Speaking on behalf of the parish, Msgr Stanislaus Soosamariam extended congratulations and prayers for the newly ordained priests and Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam. He also acknowledged Bro Joseph Tan from the parish, who recently completed his seminary studies, expressing hope that he would soon be ordained a deacon.

A short video presentation featuring Fr Philip and Fr Anthony was screened during the celebration.

Fr Philip thanked the congregation for their prayers and support, and expressed appreciation to Msgr Stanislaus for granting his request to celebrate his Thanksgiving Mass at his home chapel. He also gave a special blessing to his mother.

Fr Anthony encouraged the faithful to continue praying for vocations, reminding them that vocations are nurtured within families and communities.

After the Mass, the community gathered for thanksgiving prayers and a cake-cutting ceremony in honour of Archbishop Emeritus Murphy, recognising his years of faithful service, humility and pastoral care. Despite health challenges, he continues to remain close to the people wherever he goes.

The celebration concluded with a fellowship dinner hosted by Fr Philip's family on the chapel grounds, bringing together clergy, family members and parishioners in a joyful spirit of unity and thanksgiving. **Bernard Anthony**



The clergy praying over Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam.

Deepening understanding of liturgy through GIRM formation

TANJUNG ARA: The parish of Stella Maris organised a formation session on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) recently, led by Fr Canisius Benjamin, *pic*. The session sought to deepen parishioners' understanding of the Holy Mass and strengthen their appreciation for the sacredness and beauty of the Church's liturgy.

The two-hour and forty-five-minute formation session drew an encouraging turnout of 95 participants, comprising parishioners, ministry members, and representatives from various parish groups. The strong attendance reflected the parish's ongoing commitment to liturgical formation and its desire to foster active, informed, and reverent participation in the Eucharistic celebration.

Throughout the session, Fr Canisius centred his presentation



Fr Canisius Benjamin (*pic inset*) helping parishioners understand the beauty of the Mass. (photo/Edward L. Olaybal)

on three key pillars contained in the Vatican's GIRM guidelines. He first explained the structure of the Mass, highlighting the flow, meaning and theological significance of each part of the Eucharistic celebration. Participants were guided to better understand how every rite and prayer contributes to the spiritual richness of the liturgy.

The formation also emphasised the distinct roles and responsibilities

of those serving in the liturgy, including celebrants, deacons, lectors and extraordinary ministers. In addition, Fr Canisius elaborated on the proper use and care of sacred vessels, liturgical items and vestments used during worship, underscoring the importance of reverence and attentiveness in all aspects of liturgical service.

An engaging question-and-answer session followed, during which participants raised practical

concerns related to liturgical practices within the parish community. Among the issues discussed was the importance of clear diction and proper pronunciation by lectors so that the Word of God may be proclaimed with clarity and understood by the congregation.

Another topic that generated thoughtful discussion concerned the liturgical significance of kneeling during the consecration.

Fr Canisius reminded participants that kneeling remains a profound expression of reverence and adoration before the Eucharist. While acknowledging that standing is permissible for individuals with physical limitations, he cautioned against treating the exception casually, noting that some healthy individuals may choose convenience over reverence if the spiritual meaning behind the posture is not properly appreciated.

The formation concluded on a positive note, with many participants expressing appreciation for the insightful and enriching session. Long-serving ministry members described it as a valuable refresher while newer volunteers found the formation especially beneficial in helping them understand the deeper meaning and responsibilities of liturgical service.

The session ultimately strengthened the parish's shared desire to foster a more prayerful, meaningful and united worship experience within the community.

Sharing Christ's love with Orang Asli children

BIDOR: An Easter gathering for Orang Asli children became a beautiful celebration of faith, joy, and community, weaving together moments of prayer, laughter, and heartfelt fellowship during the Easter Season in early May.

Held at Chapel Ibunda Maria in Kampung Chang, the gathering drew some 60 Orang Asli children and parents who came together at the humble chapel with open hearts and eager smiles. Joining them were 41 Catholics from Kuala Lumpur together with a lay leader from the Chapel of St Joseph. The initiative was carried out with the blessing and encouragement of parish priest Fr James Pitchay.

The gathering aimed to bring alive the joy and message of the Risen Christ through prayer, reflection, fellowship, games, and acts of sharing. More than just an event, it became a living witness of Easter hope — re-

mindful all present that Christ continues to walk with His people in every village and community.

The day began with a prayer session in Bahasa Malaysia and English inside the chapel, led by Orang Asli Catholic lay leader Kak Jun. In a reflection shared by the Kuala Lumpur group leader, the children were reminded that Jesus came to do the will of the Father and entrusted His mission to His apostles, a mission that now belongs to the whole Church. Despite hardships and challenges faced by the early Christians, they remained faithful in proclaiming the Good News — a calling that continues today.

The Orang Asli children were gently encouraged to become little witnesses of Christ in their own homes and village, sharing with their families and neighbours who Jesus, the Risen Lord, is. They were also reminded to cultivate a daily life of

prayer and to make use of the chapel as a sacred place for quiet reflection and personal encounters with God.

After the prayer session, the chapel foyer came alive with cheerful conversations during a tea fellowship. Guests and villagers mingled warmly over a simple meal, creating a beautiful atmosphere of Christian unity, friendship, and solidarity.

For many of the children, however, the highlight of the day was undoubtedly the lively indoor games and colouring competition. The chapel echoed with laughter as children and adults alike participated enthusiastically in games such as balloon blowing and passing the ball. Joy knew no boundaries as parents, children, and visitors shared moments of pure delight together. Small prizes added to the excitement, while the colouring competition allowed the children to express their creativity with great enthusiasm.

A particularly touching moment came when Easter goody bags were distributed to 24 children aged seven and above. Filled with practical items such as pillows, milk, biscuits,



toothbrushes, stationery sets, shower gel, chocolates, and canned lychees, the gifts were received with radiant smiles and heartfelt gratitude. For the children, these were not merely presents, but tangible reminders of love, care, and the joy of the Risen Lord.

The gathering concluded with closing prayers in both English and Bahasa Malaysia, bringing to an end a day filled with grace, hope, and cherished memories. What may have seemed like an ordinary day became, for many in the Orang Asli

community, a meaningful encounter with faith, friendship, and the love of Christ.

The Kuala Lumpur group has been journeying with and witnessing the faith to this village community for more than a decade. Before departing, the group also visited four non-Christian homes, offering simple food items as gestures of friendship and compassion — quietly reflecting the spirit of Easter through acts of kindness and human connection.

Bernard Anthony



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SMC parishioners commit to mission and renewal

IPOH: The Parish Assembly of the Church of St Michael was held on April 26, bringing together about 240 English and Chinese-speaking parishioners for an afternoon of prayer, reflection and planning. The gathering began with praise and worship in both languages, the enthronement of the Word of God, and an opening address by parish priest, Fr Aloysius Tan.

Fr Aloysius thanked parishioners for their active participation and highlighted the parish's strengths, including the generosity of its members, strong ministry and BEC bonds, and pride in its 135-year history. He outlined three objectives for the assembly: to review and discern the parish's future direction, strengthen parish structures, and encourage continued growth in mission despite changing social

realities. He also proposed three priorities for growth — ongoing formation for ministries and BECs, stronger youth ministry, and leadership renewal through “pastoral sabbaticals” for long-serving leaders to allow new leadership to emerge.

A report by the parish Think Tank Team (TTT), presented by Martin Jalleh and Alex Choong, organised parish feedback from the 2025 assembly into four key areas based on the lay vocation: personal holiness, community, ministry and mission, and spiritual maturity. These formed the basis of the parish's 2026 mission statement: “Discipleship through Sanctification, Mission and Community” which was formulated by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Reflecting on the Gospel story of the paralysed man, participants were reminded of eight essential



qualities for ministry and mission, including compassion, creativity, communication, commitment and being centred on Christ.

The Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson, Jennifer Duarte, then led the whole assembly into small group discussions where participants proposed practical projects to support the parish theme, such as online rosaries, Bible study sessions, outreach to inactive Catholics, inter-BEC and inter-

ministry collaborations, youth assisting seniors with IT, community gardening, and initiatives to welcome newcomers. Each ministry and BEC were asked to commit to one project to be implemented from May 2026 to April 2027.

The assembly concluded with an interactive Q&A session, a closing prayer and blessing by Fr Aloysius, followed by a fellowship dinner, ending the day on a hopeful and united note.



Bible Knowledge seminar equips students for exams and faith

CHERAS: The St Pio Room at the Church of St Francis of Assisi (SFA) became a vibrant centre of faith and learning on May 9 as forty-four Form Four and Form Five students from across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur gathered for the second consecutive SPM Bible Knowledge (BK) Seminar.

The seminar aimed to help students deepen their understanding of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles while equipping them with practical skills and confidence for their upcoming examinations.

The day began at 7:30 am with a modern and engaging approach to Scripture learning. In collaboration with the Christian Teachers Federation (CTF), participants took part in the FCMSM BK26 Online Quiz on the Gospel of Luke, showing how digital tools can positively enrich the study of God's Word.

Students who scored above 86 per cent received special prizes, while those achieving 40 per cent and above were awarded certifi-



cates together with co-curricular points for their school records.

The seminar featured two experienced facilitators, Helton Culas and Amelia Tan, both retired educators with extensive experience teaching SPM Bible Knowledge.

Helton, from the Church of the Visitation in Seremban, guided the morning sessions with insights into past-year examination trends and context questions from Luke and Acts. In the afternoon, Amelia, formerly of

St Mary's Secondary School and a member of the CTF, focused on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and essay-writing techniques for Section C of the examination paper.

The intensive ten-hour programme was supported by 12 BK teachers from SFA, many of whom are young educators taking on leadership roles in the ministry.

The seminar also reflected a spirit of unity and collaboration within the Church, with

teachers participating from various parishes in the archdiocese, including the Church of the Assumption, Petaling Jaya; Church of St Ignatius, Petaling Jaya; Church of St Joseph, Sentul; and Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Puchong. Teachers from the Diocese of Malacca Johore — including the Church of the Holy Spirit, Jasin and Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Melaka — as well as the Calvary Education Resource Centre, were also present.

The day concluded at 5.30pm with the presentation of prizes and tokens of appreciation to the facilitators. Beyond examination strategies and academic preparation, students were reminded that studying Bible Knowledge is not merely about achieving good grades, but about building a lifelong foundation rooted in the Word of God.

As participants returned home, they carried with them not only notes and study materials, but also renewed confidence, encouragement and a deeper appreciation of their faith journey. **Isaac Netto**

CIC launches *The GROW Mystagogue* to strengthen catechetical formation

JOHOR BAHRU: The Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) has recently initiated an advanced catechetical training series entitled *The GROW Mystagogue*, aimed at equipping parish catechists with effective pedagogical tools for the transmission of the Catholic faith in today's context.

Designed and conducted by Deacon Prof Dr Sherman Kuek OFS, the parish catechetical director, the programme consists of seven

masterclasses attended by more than 30 catechists from the parish.

The curriculum was developed through a rigorous academic process involving a Qualitative Documentational Analysis (QDA) of over 100 academic and ecclesiastical sources, together with a corresponding Type 1 Design and Development Research (DDR) phase. This ensures that the programme is intellectually robust, pastorally relevant, and

fully compliant with the teachings of the Church.

Central to *The GROW Mystagogue* is the integration of the Pedagogy of God — also known as the Divine Pedagogy — with contemporary educational frameworks to enhance the delivery of catechesis. Among the approaches incorporated into the programme are TPACK-XK for digital inculturation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for inclusive instructional design, and Integral Ecology, also referred to as Education for Sustainable Development.

The masterclasses also employ Backward Design and the “See–Judge–Act–Convert” model, enabling participants to move towards a more transformative and integrated pedagogical approach.

This direction reflects the guidance of the *Directory for Catechesis* (2020), which states that the integration of the “human sciences” into catechetical pedagogy is “indispensable” if educational practices are to be profoundly renewed.

Similarly, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) explains that the Church “does not have a particular method nor

any single method... [rather], she assumes those methods which are not contrary to the Gospel and places them at its service.” In this spirit, the programme seeks to adapt the proclamation of the Gospel effectively to the realities of the contemporary listener.

Admission into *The GROW Mystagogue* is intentionally selective. Participation is open only to catechists who have successfully completed the 48-lesson God Redeeming Our World (GROW) programme conducted in collaboration with the Splendour Project (www.splendourproject.com/grow).

While the foundational GROW programme focused on the systematic study of Church teaching, *The GROW Mystagogue* concentrates on the practical methodology of catechesis.

Upon fulfilling the programme requirements, participants will receive certification recognising their competency in this specialised curriculum. Through the integration of Divine Pedagogy and the human sciences, the initiative seeks to ensure that the transmission of the Catholic faith remains both doctrinally sound and pedagogically effective for future generations. **Emmy Jong**



Catholic hospital adopts AI ethics code

SEOUL: A Catholic medical centre in South Korea's capital, Seoul, has adopted what it says is the country's first Medical Artificial Intelligence Ethics Code introduced by a health-care institution.

The Catholic Medical Centre (CMC) of the Catholic University of Korea announced the code during its Ethical AI Transformation Symposium on May 7, according to a press release from Seoul Archdiocese.

Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taik of Seoul and Apostolic Nuncio to Korea Archbishop Giovanni Gaspari attended the symposium along with other dignitaries and professionals including health experts, politicians and government officials.

The newly proclaimed code sets forth four guiding principles: Values and Missions, reflecting the Catholic Medical Centre's core identity and mission; Human-Centricity and Control; Trustworthiness and Data Ethics; and Social Justice and Responsibility.

These principles are further articulated through 12 practical guidelines designed to ensure that the development and use of artificial intelligence in healthcare remain firmly grounded in human dignity, ethical responsibility, and the common good.

Dr Chang-ki Min, Vice President for Medical Affairs and Director of the medical centre, described the proclamation as "a declaration that protecting the dignity of patients in

the healing process is itself a form of innovation, no less important than enhancing the clinical value of AI."

He expressed hope that the CMC's Medical AI Ethics Code would serve as "a meaningful starting point for shaping practical standards for medical AI ethics in Korea."

In his address, Archbishop Chung said the essence of medicine lies not merely in the transmission of knowledge, but in "a human relationship in which one life recognises and respects another."

"A machine may be able to analyse suffering, but it cannot stand with us before that suffering," he said. That irreplaceable act of accompaniment, he stressed, "must



always remain the responsibility of human beings."

"Even when artificial intelligence one day becomes fully integrated into the medical field, I pray that those who suffer may still come to feel, through the presence of health-care professionals at their side, that they are beloved of God," he added.

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gaspari reflected on the ethical challenges posed by rapidly ad-

vancing technology.

"At times, we may be tempted to entrust our problems to this seemingly all-powerful 'intelligence,'" he said.

"Yet the truly important task is not to humanise artificial intelligence, but to preserve and cultivate what is most deeply human in a world that is becoming ever more technological," he added. UCA News

Seminar equips educators to safeguard children



Teachers and facilitators attend a three-day seminar on "Child Rights and Protection," held in Bandarban, Bangladesh, from May 7-9, 2026. (RVA photo)

BANDARBAN: A three-day seminar in southeastern Bangladesh equipped teachers and facilitators with skills to create safe, supportive and child-friendly learning environments in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Titled *Child Rights and Protection*, the seminar was held at the Fiat Pastoral Centre in Bandarban from May 7 to 9. The programme brought together educators and project stakeholders working across the region.

The event was jointly organised by Caritas Bangladesh, Chattogram Region, the Chattogram Archdiocesan Commission for Justice and Peace, and the Education for Disadvantaged Children programme, with support from Kindermissionswerk and World Vision Bangladesh.

The seminar featured interactive and practical sessions designed to

deepen participants' understanding of child rights within both the national framework and the unique socio-cultural context of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Key topics included risk identification, prevention strategies against child abuse, safeguarding principles, and the promotion of a participatory and mission-oriented synodal Church. Participants also explored the impact of climate change in the CHT region, examining how environmental challenges affect children and how communities can better support their adaptation and resilience.

A total of 38 participants, including 18 women, took part in the sessions, contributing to discussions and collaborative learning activities. Through the initiative, attendees gained practical knowledge, professional guidance and skills relevant to their work with children and local communities. RVA

Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta launches first-ever newsletter

PAKISTAN: Bishop Sebastian Francis Shaw, Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, inaugurated *The Emerging Lights of Balochistan*, the Vicariate's first-ever newsletter, during a ceremony held at Bishop's House, Quetta, southwestern Pakistan, on May 7.

The launch marked a milestone for the local Church, coinciding with the bishop's 17th Episcopal anniversary and the global obser-

vance of World Communications Day, on May 17.

Bishop Shaw emphasised that the Catholic faith is truly emerging in Balochistan. He noted that the publication's title perfectly reflects the journey of the local community, one that is moving toward a future filled with hope, light, and increased connectivity. He praised the initiative as a bold step toward digital and print trans-

parency within the mission.

Given the specific landscape of Balochistan, this initiative serves as a vital lifeline for the Church. In a province characterised by its vast, rugged terrain and geographically scattered Catholic communities, the newsletter acts as a formal communication bridge.

The editorial team will be led by Fr Tazeem Saghar OFM Cap as Editor, with Fr Imtiaz Faryad and Sr Veronica Mangal serving as members. Sr Veronica Mangal, reflecting on the newsletter's mission, noted that this publication provides a unique opportunity to showcase the tireless service of religious sisters and the laity in the most remote corners of the province.

The inaugural edition contains comprehensive reports on the vicariate's various activities, pastoral visits, and youth programmes, and will be distributed to all Catholic dioceses across Pakistan.

By making the content available nationwide, the Vicariate aims to bridge the local faithful with the broader national Catholic community, aligning with the universal Church's call for authentic storytelling and the promotion of a culture of encounter. RVA



Bishop Sebastian Francis Shaw and Fr Tazeem Saghar, OFM Cap, editor, presented the Vicariate's first newsletter at Bishop's House in Quetta, Pakistan, on May 7, 2026. (RVA photo)

Indian Church leaders hail Tamil Nadu liquor restrictions

INDIA: Church leaders in Tamil Nadu state, in southern India, have welcomed a decision by the newly elected Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay to close liquor outlets located near churches, temples, schools, and bus stations, describing the move as a positive step toward tackling alcoholism.

Vijay, the state's first Christian chief minister, ordered officials a day after he took office on May 10 to shut liquor shops within 500 meters of places of worship, educational

institutions, and bus stations, within two weeks.

"Obviously, it is a right step towards abolishing liquor shops close to educational institutions and worship places," said Jesuit priest and lawyer Fr A. Santhanam, who practices at the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court, May 13.

"We appreciate the new chief minister for showing concern, especially for children, as liquor shops close to schools send a wrong message to young minds," he said.

Santhanam said Vijay's election manifesto included promises to curb the use of contraband substances and reduce alcohol-related social harm.

"The women in the state want complete prohibition as they are the worst victims of alcoholism," he said.

Sr Elizabeth Rani, an academician based in Tamil Nadu, said the government's decision was encouraging but insufficient to address widespread alcohol abuse.

"This is a wonderful step, but not

enough to nip the menace of alcoholism," said the Catholic nun.

"Even small children are drawn to alcohol because they see liquor shops near schools and people consuming alcohol openly," said the member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary congregation.

She called for total prohibition in the state, saying that alcoholism has contributed to family breakdowns, child neglect, and rising crime.

"The state needs to plan for total prohibition by taking all stakehold-

ers into its confidence," she said.

Tamil Nadu currently has 4,765 liquor retail outlets operated by the state-run Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation. Authorities have identified 717 shops, or some 15 per cent of liquor shops, for closure under the new order.

The state collected 483.44 billion rupees (RM22.5 billion) in alcohol tax in the 2024-2025 financial year, accounting for about 25 per cent of all taxes collected in the state. UCA News

Pope Leo XIV to address AI in first encyclical

VATICAN: Pope Leo XIV is expected to issue his first encyclical soon, with reports indicating the document will focus on artificial intelligence and what it means to be human in an increasingly digital world.

According to reports, the encyclical may be titled *Magnifica Humanitas* (*Magnificent Humanity*) and would continue the Church's long tradition of Catholic social teaching begun by Pope Leo XIII through his landmark 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

The forthcoming document is expected to offer moral and spiritual guidance on the challenges posed by artificial intelligence, technological development and emerging ideologies such as transhumanism and post-humanism.

Anna Rowlands, theologian and professor of Catholic social thought at Durham University, described Catholic social teaching as a "living" tradition that continually responds to changing historical realities. She noted that Pope Leo XIV is now entering that stream at a moment when artificial intelligence has become one of the defining issues of the age.

Since *Rerum Novarum*, popes have addressed major social concerns ranging from labour rights and war to environmental degradation and economic injustice. Central themes of Catholic social teaching include human dignity, solidarity, the common good and care for the poor and vulnerable.

Speaking during an apostolic visit to Cameroon in April, Pope Leo urged Catholic

university students not to fear "new things" but to become "pioneers of a new humanism in the context of the digital revolution."

Church thinkers say the Pope's anticipated encyclical is likely to stress that technological progress must always remain subordinate to human dignity and the Christian understanding of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God.

The document is also expected to caution against forms of technological culture that weaken human relationships, spirituality and authentic community life. Experts note growing concern within the Church about how excessive technological dependence and artificial intelligence may affect interpersonal relationships, worship, creativity



and human identity itself.

Fr Michael Baggot, a theology professor specialising in transhumanism and ethics, said Pope Leo XIV appears committed to promoting a Christian humanism that embraces technological development without sacrificing the dignity of the weak, vulnerable and marginalised. **Register**

Artist warns against "hollow" AI sacred art

VATICAN: Vatican City Postal and Philatelic Service has issued a commemorative stamp marking the first anniversary of the election of Pope Leo XIV.

Released on May 8, the stamp features a portrait of the Holy Father set against an image of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, whose feast is celebrated by the Church on the same day.

Spanish artist Raúl Berzosa, who designed the stamp, explained that the Blessed Virgin is depicted looking down upon Pope Leo XIV "as a sign of maternal protection."

The commemorative stamp continues Berzosa's longstanding collaboration with the Vatican. His previous works include the stamp marking Pope Francis' 80th birthday in 2016, the 2019 stamp commemorating the late pontiff's golden jubilee of priesthood, and several Vatican Easter stamp collections.

The latest stamp, priced at 1.35 euros (US\$1.59), has a limited print run of 45,000 copies and was printed in Belgium using four-colour offset lithography.

Speaking to *ACI Prensa*, the Spanish-language news partner of *EWTN*, Berzosa also reflected on the growing use of artificial intelligence in religious art, stressing the importance of human creativity, spiritual depth



Raúl Berzosa paints the new commemorative stamp of Pope Leo XIV. (EWTN Photo/Raúl Berzosa)

and discernment.

"I believe that sacred art is not merely the final result we see; it is the product of reflection. The time and effort invested are what give it the artist's personal imprint," he said.

While acknowledging that AI-generated images can appear visually impressive, Berzosa cautioned that they often lack originality and emotional authenticity.

"AI does not feel or experience what it depicts. The artist, by contrast, leaves something of himself in every work," he said.

The artist noted that many AI-generated



images tend to rely on visually dramatic elements such as flawless faces, intense lighting and spectacular scenery, resulting in artworks that appear striking but often resemble one another.

He also expressed concern that sacred imagery generated through AI could become superficial or overly fantastical, losing its deeper spiritual purpose within the Christian tradition.

"Religious images are not merely decorative," he explained. "They are also a tool for evangelisation," helping believers draw

closer to God and to the message of the Gospel.

Berzosa observed that throughout the centuries, Christian art has produced an immense diversity of styles and expressions rooted in human experience, prayer and contemplation — something he believes contrasts sharply with the uniformity often found in AI-generated works.

He admitted feeling both fascinated and unsettled after seeing some of his own paintings animated through artificial intelligence.

"I have seen my own paintings 'come to life and move,' and seeing them gave me a bittersweet feeling," he shared.

Nevertheless, Berzosa clarified that technology itself is not the enemy of art and can serve as a valuable complementary tool for artists, particularly in developing ideas, studying lighting and preparing compositions.

However, he stressed that human discernment remains essential.

"Technology can help, but human sensibility is needed to know which image is appropriate," he said, warning that problems arise when technology begins to replace human talent, creativity and spiritual insight altogether. **EWTN**

Laudato Si' spirit drives green movement in Goa

CHICALIM: Participants of the Green Guardians Certificate Course in Goa shared heartfelt commitments to "care for creation," blending spirituality, ecological awareness, and practical action in a faith-driven movement inspired by *Laudato Si'*.

The Green Guardians Certificate Course, themed *A Lenten Path of Ecological Conversion*, concluded May 9 at the Church of St Francis Xavier, with a valedictory function that celebrated ecological awareness and faith-driven climate action.

Organised by the Salesian Sisters in collaboration with the Diocesan Commission for Ecology, the programme drew 115 participants from across Goa and beyond.

"This was not merely a certificate course but a movement to build a community of environmentally conscious citizens committed to protecting Mother Earth," organisers emphasised.

Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the course combined spirituality, environmental awareness, and practical ini-

tiatives. Sessions ran weekly from February 24 to March 31, in hybrid mode, with livestreaming coordinated by Nathaniel Nunes.

Resource persons included Dr Jean D'Cunha, a United Nations development expert known for her work on gender and social justice, who spoke on Integral Ecology and Eco Spirituality, stressing the link between environmental destruction and social inequality.

Architect Tallulah D'Silva, recognised in South Asia for her sustainable design initiatives, led sessions on sustainable development and responsible consumption, including an eco-construction workshop with the Tambdi Matti Foundation, a grassroots organisation promoting traditional building methods.

Dr. Alvarinho Luis, a climate scientist, addressed global warming and climate change realities, while Advocate Richard Almeida, a legal expert on environmental law, explained frameworks for citizen participation in protecting natural resources.

Reflective assignments and questionnaires encouraged participants to apply lessons

in their personal lives and communities. "Care for creation is a sacred responsibility," Auxiliary Bishop Simiao Purificação Fernandes of Goa and Daman, said in his homily during the closing Mass.

The valedictory programme on May 12, included a Mass themed *Care for Creation, Our Mission Continues*, celebrated by Bishop Fernandes.

Certificates of Completion were presented to participants, with special awards recognising outstanding contributions.

Honours included recognition for the best environmental assignment, the first course registration, and the parish that achieved the highest level of participation throughout the programme.

The event concluded with a collective Green Pledge and an eco-friendly fellowship meal symbolising sustainability and community living.

"Our mission continues," Bishop Fernandes urged, calling on all Green Guardians to carry forward ecological responsibility with dedication and faith. **Matters India**



(Catholic Connect photo)

A Church that learned to listen

Richard Chia

In early 2005, preparations quietly began for what would become a defining moment in the journey of the Peninsular Malaysia Church — the Third Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Convention (PMPC III), scheduled for August 2006. Organised by the Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Team (PMPT), the convention was envisioned not merely as another ecclesial gathering, but as a continuation of a journey that had begun decades earlier through *Aggiornamento* 1976 and the first two pastoral conventions.

By then, the Church in Peninsular Malaysia had already accumulated nearly three decades of pastoral experience, dialogue, and reflection. The bishops recognised that PMPC III could not simply be another four-day event attended by several hundred delegates behind closed doors. If the Church was truly to become a participatory and dialoguing community, then the voices of the wider faithful needed to be heard. The preparation itself had to become part of the pastoral experience.

The bishops of Peninsular Malaysia therefore decided that the road to PMPC III would involve participation at every level of Church life — clergy, religious, and laity alike. Rather than limiting discussions to official delegates, they wanted to hear the hopes, struggles, concerns, and aspirations of ordinary Catholics across the peninsula, including those who would never physically attend the convention itself.

To achieve this, three major pre-conventions were planned: the **Clergy Pre-PMPC III Convention**, the **Religious Pre-PMPC III Convention**, and the **Laity Pre-PMPC III Convention**. Each pre-convention was entrusted to separate organising teams, while the PMPT coordinated the overall process. The four language apostolates — Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, Tamil, and English — were fully incorporated into the planning, reflecting the rich multicultural reality of the Malaysian Church.

Extensive questionnaires were prepared and distributed months ahead at parish, district, and Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) levels, as well as to lay organisations and ministries. Responses were carefully collated and synthesised through various stages before being compiled into documents that would eventually shape the discussions and direction of PMPC III itself.

Among the three pre-conventions, the Laity Pre-Convention was by far the most extensive and logistically demanding. Drawing inspiration from the *Bishops' Roadshow* conducted nearly a decade earlier in 1997, teams of facilitators and presenters travelled throughout Peninsular Malaysia,

In this 18th instalment of the series tracing the journey of the Church in Peninsular Malaysia, we revisit the remarkable preparations leading to PMPC III in 2006, when the Church embarked on an extraordinary nationwide journey of listening, dialogue, and participation that reached thousands of individuals comprising clergy, religious, and lay faithful across the peninsula in a shared effort to discern the mission and future of the local Church together.



conducting one-day assemblies in districts, deaneries, and vicariates. Facilitators from the four language apostolates journeyed from parish to parish, often across long distances, to ensure that Catholics from every background had an opportunity to participate. It was a remarkable expression of a listening Church — one willing to journey with its people and engage them at grassroots level.

The Laity Pre-Convention adopted what became known as the “Three R Process” — Review, Renew, and Relive.

The **Review** stage invited participants to reflect on the journey of the Church in Peninsular Malaysia, the realities confronting society, and the experiences of Catholics living within the wider human family. It encouraged honest reflection on both the joys and struggles of being Church in a rapidly changing nation.

The **Renew** stage focused on rediscovering the vocation of the laity in light of *Christifideles Laici*, the 1988 post-synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II. The document called for a deeper appreciation of the role of lay people in the mission of the Church, affirming that the laity were not merely passive recipients within Church life, but active participants in Christ’s mission.

Finally, the **Relive** stage centred on the PMPC III theme: *Sentire Cum Ecclesia* — “To Think and Feel with the Church.” It sought to foster solidarity among bishops, clergy, religious, and laity, strengthening a shared sense of identity and mission within the local Church of Peninsular Malaysia.

Attendance at the Laity Pre-Conventions exceeded expectations. Between 150 and 200 participants attended each gathering, and in total, more than 5,000 lay faithful across Peninsular Malaysia are estimated to have participated in the assemblies. Many were

parish leaders, BEC coordinators, ministry members, and representatives from various lay movements and language communities. For many participants, it was the first time they experienced such a large-scale process of ecclesial consultation and dialogue.

The Religious Pre-Convention was held from May 2 to 6, 2006, at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute in Kuala Lumpur. Representatives from 21 institutes of consecrated men and women gathered in what became a deeply significant moment of renewal and unity. During the gathering, the religious made a wholehearted “Aku Janji” (“I Promise”), committing themselves to greater inter-congregational collaboration and shared ministry alongside bishops, clergy, and laity. In a spirit of humility and enthusiasm, many consciously chose to set aside individual congregational emphases in favour of working together more closely for the good of the People of God facing increasingly complex social and pastoral challenges.

Meanwhile, the Clergy Pre-Convention took place from February 6 to 24, 2006, at MAJODI Centre in Johor. The 21-day gathering involved 124 bishops, priests, and deacons who embarked on an intensive period of prayer, reflection, dialogue, and discernment concerning their vocation and priestly mission within the realities of Malaysian society.

The gathering was historically significant for another reason. For two consecutive weekends, many parishes throughout Peninsular Malaysia were left without priests — only the second time such an absence had occurred on a large scale. The first had been during *Aggiornamento* 1976, when clergy had similarly withdrawn from parish ministry for an extended period of renewal and reflection.

For the clergy who attended the Pre-Convention it was a spiritual pilgrimage — a moment to pause, re-examine their priesthood, and discern anew how they were called to serve the Church and society in a changing Malaysia.



Lay leader John Simon of the Church of St Joseph in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur conducting a funeral service (file pic).



Pre-PMPC III Convention, from the left: Clergy, Laity and Religious.

Unmasking the ugly truth



Dancing with Dementia
Dr Cecilia Chan

When I first met June (not her real name), she existed in a state of withdrawal. She could hardly walk; her voice was strained and soft, her words often lost before they could reach the air. She even struggled to lift her hands or find the strength to smile. Six months later, the June I see is unrecognisable. Now, she is the one offering a steadying hand to others, guiding them to the washroom or the kitchen. She helps us prepare meals with confidence and has even stood alongside the Fire Department during drills. She often teases me now, joking that I am the worst-dressed person in the centre. She now has the confidence to dance her own way, freely. During our recent pop-up *Forgotten Mutiara* café, where June served as the master chef, a reporter asked about her journey. She shared something profound that really hit me hard. She explained that transformation began the moment she felt accepted. When she was no longer corrected with insult, ignored, or dismissed for the ways she had changed. Because she was finally seen and accepted for who she truly is, she felt safe enough to relax. She felt safe enough to be herself.

That interview reinforced my core belief: as a society, we have the power to transform the lives of those living with dementia. When we replace discrimination with radical acceptance, we don't just provide care — we restore meaning.

Why is this simple truth so hard for our society to fathom? Recently, I received a desperate call from an aged care operator. She was “losing her mind” because a resident was wandering, eating other people’s food, and sleeping in various beds. Her solution? Send him to a psychiatric

clinic for sedation so he will stop roaming. I really wish that this were an isolated case, but unfortunately, it is all too common in Malaysia.

This is the reality in Malaysia — an ageing nation that is, tragically, unprepared. We have accepted physical and chemical restraints as “normal practice” because we have failed to provide our workforce with the tools to support cognitive impairment.

Consider the irony: In Malaysia, we wouldn't let a hairdresser touch a pair of scissors without six months of training on a mannequin. We demand mastery before someone can cut hair, yet when it comes to the complex, shifting landscape of a human life, we expect families and staff to jump into the complex caregiving of dementia with no training and no manual. We have decided that the most delicate human condition requires the least amount of preparation.

There is an obvious irony at the heart of modern health care: dementia is, arguably,



(Freepik)

one of the most clinically complex conditions a human can endure, yet the primary workforce tasked with managing it is often the least trained. This educational vacuum creates a devastating domino effect. When care is rooted in misunderstanding rather than clinical strategy, the resulting ‘behaviours’ are often met with frustration or sedation rather than empathy.

This mismanagement doesn't just hurt the individual; it weaponises the stigma surrounding the disease. As long as we continue to discriminate through a lack of specialised training, we perpetuate a culture of fear. We see a person with a ‘behavioural problem’ rather than a person struggling with a neurological barrier. Consequently, shame becomes the silent companion of the diagnosis, forcing families into a desperate isolation. Without a proper support infrastructure, caregivers reach a breaking point, and the only remaining ‘solution’ is a transition to long-term care facilities — institutions that are themselves struggling

under the weight of the same staffing shortages and training deficits.

This systemic failure leads directly to the “invisible weight” carried behind closed doors. I recently sat in a Zoom call with a devoted husband who is caring for his wife alone. He broke down — not from a lack of love, but from the crushing weight of guilt, exhaustion, and loneliness.

He feels he is failing because society has told him this is a burden he must carry in silence. Stigma keeps him from reaching out, and the lack of community support keeps him isolated.

Caregiver burnout is not a personal failure; it is a systemic one. For too long, we have treated the exhaustion of those caring for our elders as a private struggle — a cross for individuals to bear in silence. In reality, this burnout is the inevitable result of a society that devalues care work and underfunds the infrastructure of aging. It is time we stop turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to this catastrophic tragedy. We cannot expect families to provide professional-level clinical support without professional-level systemic resources. To ignore the collapse of the caregiver is to ignore the collapse of the very foundation of our community.

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

Discernment in the Holy Spirit for a synodal Malaysian Church

As we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the Church in Malaysia stands at a threshold. We are invited into a “synodal” way of being, that is a Church that listens, discerns and acts. The Church is undergoing a profound transformation, moving from a rigid, hierarchical structure toward a synodal model characterised by communion, participation, and mission. Yet we must begin with a series of challenging questions. Can there be a genuine communal discernment in the Holy Spirit without first a personal discernment in the choices of our own lives? Since the Church speaks of a “Synodality for Mission,” can there be true discernment without a personal way of life that is oriented towards mission? We must ask ourselves: are we missionary Catholics, or do our daily choices reflect something else? Similarly, can we have authentic discernment in our parishes if we remain “maintenance parishes” rather than missionary ones?

The Heart of discernment: The Holy Spirit and the Word

Discernment is the prayerful way we try to recognise what God is asking of us now — to choose the path of greater love and mission. Pope Francis explains it simply: God “wants children, not slaves,” inviting us to daily seek the Spirit’s guidance. This is not merely human logic; it is an “exercise of the will, the intelligence, and the heart”. Pope Leo XIV adds that in a synodal Church, “no one should impose his or her own ideas; we must all listen to one another,” because truth is sought together in humility and trust.

The theology of synodality is predicated on the recovery of the *sensus fidei* — the “sense of the faith” bestowed upon every

baptised person by the Holy Spirit. This supernatural instinct allows the People of God to recognise and endorse authentic Christian doctrine and practice while rejecting what is false. Thus, authentic discernment must be grounded in the Word of God, which provides the objective standard to judge our inspirations. Scripture, alongside Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium, forms the “sacred deposit” that guards us against subjective whims. When an interior movement harmonises with Gospel values, it is affirmed; when it contradicts them, it is rejected.

Application: From the home to the parish

In our families, the “domestic churches,” discernment means making Jesus the centre of the home. Parents and children can adapt the “Conversation in the Spirit” (CIS) method — using silence and prayerful listening — before making major decisions regarding finances, education, or relationships. This (CIS) involves three rounds:

- 1) Each person speaks while others listen without interrupting;
- 2) Each shares what resonated from others;
- 3) The family then identifies where the Spirit is leading.” In the parish, we must move from being “bureaucratic” to being “relational”. Councils and ministries should use the “Conversation in the Spirit” method to move beyond asking “What is efficient?” to “What will help our people grow in holiness and mission?”. This ensures that the “fourth actor” — the Holy Spirit — is not sidelined by administrative tasks.

Wisdom from the great spiritual masters

The Catholic tradition offers a “science of the interior life” to navigate these movements. *Master Key Insight for Discernment*

St Ignatius of Loyola	Taught us to distinguish between “spiritual consolation” —which increases faith, hope, and love — and “spiritual desolation,” marked by darkness, turmoil, and restlessness. He warns that we should never make major changes during times of desolation.
St Teresa of Avila	She reminds us that the ultimate test of any “spiritual” experience is an increase in humility and detachment
St John of the Cross	He counsels that true progress often involves a “dark night” where we must trust God even when felt guidance is absent.
St Benedict	Discernment happens in a community when all choices should be for “edification”— building up the Body of Christ in love.

Malaysian challenges and the way forward

The Church in Malaysia faces unique cultural obstacles. The “digital noise” of our modern world often drowns out God’s voice, fostering a “culture of zapping” that hinders deep reflection. Furthermore, “therapeutic individualism” and “rampant relativism” encourage us to follow our feelings rather than the objective truth. Locally, we also contend with the “caste” mentality of language and socio-economic divisions. We can break this mentality, for example, by giving the same amount of time and value to a migrant worker’s voice as to a wealthy professional’s voice during a parish meeting.

To grow in discernment, we must prioritise adult catechesis (formation). Many of the laity feel ill-prepared for synodal listening because they lack a firm grasp of Scripture and Church teaching. We need “intensive and ongoing human formation” that moves us from passive participation to active mission. As we look



towards the Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026, we are called to a process of kenosis — a self-emptying that allows Christ’s synodal body to take flesh in our local context. This Pentecost, let us ask for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit to act as “supernatural instincts,” making us docile to God’s advice in every detail of our lives. By walking together, we can truly say, “It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”. Come Holy Spirit! **Deacon Clement Samuel**

Deacon Clement is the Head of the Penang Diocese Catechetical Commission.



Not just a VOICE on the radio

In an age of filtered narratives and artificial voices, a Malaysian radio veteran has spent four decades proving that people still hunger for something unmistakably human — honesty, warmth, vulnerability and a voice that truly connects.

Christina Lazaroo

For many Malaysians, the voice of Fabian James, better known as “Phat Fabes”, lived through every era of radio and stayed relevant through all of them. Growing up, his voice became part of my school morning commutes, traffic jams, difficult days and later on, late-night drives. Warm, humorous and effortlessly familiar, Fabian carries the same easy-going charm off air as he does behind the microphone. This year marks Fabian’s

30th year on radio and his 40th year in the entertainment industry. Over the decades, his voice has become familiar across some of the country’s most recognisable radio stations — *Classic Rock*, *HITZ FM*, *MIX FM*,

and now, *LITE FM* — where he has delivered everything from legendary classic rock to today’s biggest hits.

Born in Ipoh and raised in Klang, Fabian’s early curiosity eventually grew into a lifelong calling that would take him into Malaysian radio history.

“Everybody else wanted to skate,” he recalled with a laugh. “I was just watching the DJ.”

Captivated by the music and energy behind the console, Fabian began learning the craft from the resident DJ before eventually landing a small after-school job there. From that humble beginning, one opportunity opened another door. A business card from “The Music Machine” led him to veteran broadcaster Patrick Teoh and eventually into the entertainment world full time.

Years later, a nervous audition at Astro would become the beginning of his radio career.

“I was shaking while holding the script,” he admitted. “I thought I was the worst radio announcer on the planet.”

It took several years before Fabian discovered the secret that would define his connection with listeners: authenticity.

The breakthrough came when he stopped performing and started being himself. “The biggest compliment is when someone says, ‘You sound exactly like you do on radio.’” That changed everything. Listeners

connected because they heard a real person, not a persona.

“When you start being yourself, people start connecting with you,” he shared.

That authenticity eventually revealed to him why radio mattered so deeply. Over the years, listeners began opening up to him about their struggles, loneliness and pain.

One story in particular still stays with him. A woman once called during his show, emotionally distressed and struggling through an abusive marriage. She admitted she had been contemplating taking her own life.

“She told me listening to the show made her feel better,” Fabian recalled.

Such encounters taught him to treat every broadcast personally. “Stop thinking you’re speaking to thousands,” he says. “Speak to one person. Everything changes.”

For Fabian, meaningful communication begins by remembering there is always a person on the other side listening.

Between stories and bursts of laughter throughout the interview, there was a noticeable shift whenever Fabian spoke about his faith. The cheerful radio personality became deeply reflective, speaking not with rehearsed piety, but as someone who had encountered God personally in suffering.

A regular parishioner at the Church of Divine Mercy in Shah Alam, Fabian openly shared about one of the darkest periods of his life, when personal struggles became overwhelming even as he still had to appear upbeat on air each day.

“The hardest thing in the world,” he said, “is leaving all your problems outside the door, turning on the mic and saying, ‘Hello, what’s going on?’”

During that difficult season, Fabian leaned entirely on God. At one point, feeling utterly defeated, he surrendered everything in prayer.

“I just said, ‘I am done. You take over.’”

As he shared his story, he himself got goosebumps remembering how things slowly began falling into place afterward. Unexpected opportunities came at the right moment. Situations changed. Fifteen years later, he still speaks about those experiences with deep conviction and gratitude.

“How can it not be God?” he asked. “I’ve seen too many miracles.”

In an industry often associated with image and compromise, Fabian has never hidden his faith. After four decades in entertainment, he remains unapologetically Catholic, speaking about his faith with both confidence and simplicity.

“I am and will always be a proud Catholic,” he said.

His clearest advice to young people wanting to enter media and entertainment is this: “Your love for Jesus has to be greater than anything else — including your job.”

He encourages them not to fear the industry but to understand their faith deeply. “Just be you. If you’re embarrassed about your faith, you need to take a closer look on your life.”

Fabian is equally candid about today’s communication culture. He laments how political correctness and fear of offending have replaced honest conversation. His simple principle: “Speak the truth, but speak the truth with love and integrity.” In a world of curated identities and carefully filtered narratives, he believes true authenticity matters now more than ever.

In many ways, Fabian embodies what this year’s World Communications Day calls us to preserve not just voices, but the humanity and hope behind them. In a noisy, filtered world, people still long for communication that feels real, compassionate, and true.

Today, a familiar voice still comes through the radio reminding thousands of listeners every day that the best communication is not merely heard, but felt.

The oil of silence

How a hidden saint and a humble priest ignited a quiet flame at a Marian parish

In a quiet room within the parochial house of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Jalan Tun Sambanthan, a hidden story slowly emerged following the passing of Fr Joachim Tan in October 2022.

Known for his prayerful and reserved nature, Fr Joachim left behind more than books and memories. Unknown to many, he had quietly nurtured a deep devotion to St Charbel, the Lebanese hermit-saint known for miracles and healing.

Only after his death did parishioners discover the extent of his hidden labour. Tucked away in cabinets were tiny bottles of St Charbel’s blessed oil — some filled, others waiting beside cotton buds and bottles of olive oil. For years, Fr Joachim had painstakingly filled these vials by hand, a humble and unseen labour of love.

The oil had been brought from the Maronite monastery in Punchbowl, Sydney, through the help of a member of the faithful. Alongside the bottles were stacks of prayer cards carefully prepared by the priest, ensuring that those who received the oil would also be drawn to prayer and the saint’s intercession.

Nearly a decade earlier, Fr Joachim had quietly converted part of the parochial house into an adoration room dedicated to St Charbel. At the time, few parishioners knew much about the saint. There were no healing rallies or public campaigns promoting devotion to him. Instead, Fr Joachim simply invited people to pray.

During the difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic, while much of the country remained under lockdown, the adoration

room stayed open under strict distancing measures. Many came seeking peace, confession, healing, and consolation before the Blessed Sacrament. Quietly and unnoticed, seeds of grace were being planted.

After Fr Joachim’s passing, the lay faithful began continuing the work he had started so discreetly. Hundreds of vials of blessed oil have since been distributed, drawing visitors not only from Malaysia but from abroad.

Among them was a couple from Singapore who visited the parish in April 2026. Though not Christians, they shared that they had experienced healing through the intercession of St Charbel and expressed a desire to spread devotion to him in their own circles.

Another testimony came from a woman in her seventies diagnosed with Stage 4 lymphoma. Encouraged by a homily to seek St Charbel’s intercession, she began praying regularly in the adoration room. During chemotherapy, her pain subsided

unexpectedly, and after treatment, medical tests showed she was cancer-free. In thanksgiving, she began making and distributing hundreds of St Charbel chaplets while sharing her testimony with others.

In February 2026, a small notice in the parish bulletin invited parishioners to deepen their devotion to St Charbel. A handful responded. What began as simple gatherings during Lent gradually became something more.

The group began making chaplets, praying together, and supporting efforts to bring a life-sized statue of St Charbel to the parish. Plans were also initiated to obtain a first-class relic from the monastery in Annaya, Lebanon. The monastery responded warmly, inviting parish representatives to collect an *Ex-Tela Sanguine* relic — a piece of the saint’s clothing soaked in his blood. However, ongoing conflict in the region has delayed those plans for now.

Yet even amid delays, providence

continued to reveal itself. Donations arrived quietly. Benefactors stepped forward. A reliquary containing a relic of St Charbel was donated and placed beside the Blessed Sacrament. More remarkably, the supply of blessed oil has never run dry.

Today, the fruits of this quiet mission continue to emerge gently. A young non-Catholic woman involved in making chaplets now desires to enter RCIA. A young mother drawn through this devotion has since been baptised. Visitors from Toronto and Manila have returned home inspired to spread devotion to St Charbel in their own parishes.

Soon, a 6.6-foot statue of the saint will stand at the entrance of the adoration room — humble, prayerful, and welcoming all who enter.

The parish also awaits the arrival of a relic from Lebanon, which it hopes to enshrine in a reliquary shaped like the Cedar of Lebanon — a symbol of the saint’s homeland and enduring spiritual legacy. Through this sacred sign, the humble hermit known for the many graces attributed to his intercession will remain spiritually present among those who come seeking prayer, healing, and peace.

In a noisy world that often equates power with attention, influence, and visibility, the story of St Charbel at Holy Rosary gently reminds us of a deeper truth — that God often works most powerfully in silence. He works through hidden saints, humble servants, and quiet moments of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps that, in itself, is the greatest miracle of all.



Disillusioned? Tap into the Spirit and the living stream of consciousness

When I was young, I believed that a move from authoritarianism to a vibrant democracy would lead to socioeconomic transformation and a better quality of life for the people.

That somehow a change in government in a general election would lead to improvements in people's lives, especially if the parties involved had manifestos that promise the world.

Looking back, I realise how naïve I was.

Someone once said democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

In other words, democracy, unlike other forms of governance, at least allows the people a say in electing their leaders. It provides a channel that theoretically allows the voices of ordinary people, through their representatives, to be heard in the corridors of power.

But it is far from perfect. Much depends on where the loyalty of elected representatives lies and what the ideology of the ruling class is.

When newly elected politicians come to power, they face tremendous temptations, much like Jesus did in the desert: the temptations of immense power and wealth.

Will they use their newfound power to benefit the ordinary people or will it be used to accumulate stupendous wealth and concentrate power in the hands of a few?

Whose interests will they predominantly serve: the elite and big business or the workers and the low-income group?

Over the years, as elections came and went and as promises were broken and manifestos discarded into the rubbish bin, my faith in elections withered.

Unless we have committed individuals who can rise above the temptations of power to serve the interests of ordinary people, we will see people being repeatedly disappointed.

The three pillars of democracy – the executive, the legislative arm and the judiciary

– which were supposed to provide checks and balances could be compromised if the executive wielded excessive power.

They who hold vast wealth and power, along with the 'deep state', could also compromise this separation of powers.

Those who dissented against the system or put forward radical alternative visions might be vilified, persecuted or punished.

Sometimes the odds against those working for social reform and transformation seem daunting, even hopeless. No matter what we do, it seems that the rich and the powerful wield enormous clout. Genuine change seems elusive.

Real change can only come about if we have committed individuals who can rise above the temptations of power to serve the interests of ordinary people.

At a time when the people were hoping for a political liberator, Jesus showed us an alternative way. He lifted up the poor and the marginalised while condemning injustice, corruption ("the den of thieves") and the accumulation of wealth.

He showed us that real change comes from the bottom, among the teeming masses in the countryside, not in the privileged cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias, the ancient hubs of Roman Galilee.

Jesus inverted the belief system of the time through the Beatitudes (Blessed are the poor...). He showed us that real change comes through acts of faith, compassion and empathy.

More than that, He showed us the real face of God – who cares for the poor, those who weep and mourn, the sick, the outcasts. To these shall the kingdom of God belong.

When Jesus overturned the moneychangers' tables, He wasn't just targeting the 'frontliners'



Sunday Observer

Anil Netto

of the system. His move was seen as a threat to the existing corrupt order – against religious leaders, who abused religion to reap enormous wealth from ordinary people, while collaborating with political leaders. In this case, it was through the sale of animals at the Temple – big business for the city of Jerusalem that burdened ordinary people.

For the powers that be, the toppling of the tables was unacceptable. It was a direct assault on the system, which had accumulated massive wealth for a small elite group.

The die was cast and Jesus was tried in a kangaroo court, tortured and executed in the most excruciating way imaginable. This was how they had put to death the prophets who had spoken truth to power and those advocating for distributive justice.

But God had the last word. Jesus rose, conquering the forces of death and left behind His Spirit. This divine power shook the empire. The Resurrection unleashed the Spirit that energised the fledgling kingdom that Jesus had heralded.

It was a cosmic outpouring of a stream of consciousness, available to all those who tapped into it. The kingdom within us could now connect to the Spirit-inspired stream of consciousness that was now available to all.

What is this stream of consciousness that can erode the hardest boulders of oppression and injustice?

The American philosopher and psychologist William James wrote in 1899 of molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual: "I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft

rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time."

Unlike the interconnectedness of the global network of billionaires, this human interconnectedness, this stream of consciousness, is a strength.

It can inspire us to work for change in the world around us from the bottom up, through one act at a time, one day at a time.

It could be simple acts of kindness, of reaching out to the homeless, the single parent, older people, the sick. It could involve activists championing human rights, workers' rights and ecological justice.

Through face-to-face contact, acts of compassion and resistance to injustice and increasingly, ecological destruction, this stream can build a new world.

Though progress may sometimes feel slow, though it might sometimes feel like hitting our heads against a brick wall, know that the Spirit holds the upper hand in the eternal battle against the forces of death and destruction.

Taking a longer view of history, where are the corrupt high priests in the Temple? Gone. Where are the animal sacrifices? Gone. Where are even the Roman emperors and the Roman Empire itself? Gone for good.

Sure, the hydra-like beast in Revelation has multiple heads, horns and crowns, popping up here and there. Today, we have to contend with the dictates of the Market (the new 'golden calf') around whose 'altar' many 'worship', the obscene concentration of wealth, the ecological treats facing the world.

But rest assured, all these are no match for the Spirit and the stream of consciousness, energy and power available to the teeming masses of ordinary people – if only we tap into it.

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

Learning about forgiveness in consecrated life

Forgiveness in religious life is not, at least for me, an abstract idea, but a concrete practice – one that is often demanding. It doesn't always come naturally. At times, it is difficult and painful. And yet, over time, I've come to see it as one of the deepest paths to freedom available to us.

Living in community is an incredible gift, but it is also a place where our weaknesses are exposed. Differences and friction come up in daily life together. We're not perfect; we are consecrated women who sometimes fall short. And in that very human space, forgiveness becomes necessary.

Looking back, I can see there were situations that felt unfair. At times, there were no clear explanations, which left me unsettled. There were also decisions and ways of acting that, over time, I came to see were not in line with the Gospel. At the time, though, I believed I had forgiven and moved on, confident in my path.

But as time went on, some of those experiences came back. They showed up in reactions I didn't expect, in memories that still hurt. That's when I began to realise, humbly, that not everything was as forgiven as I thought.

That realisation wasn't easy, but I needed it. I sensed that God was showing me that forgiveness doesn't happen once and for all. Sometimes we have to go back to it. There are parts of the heart that only time, prayer

and grace can slowly heal.

In those moments, I learned to do something simple: I placed that part of my story back in God's hands. I named it in prayer, without softening it, and said, "Lord, this too belongs to You. Heal it." Little by little, something inside me began to loosen.

Especially in the early years, I had a very simple understanding of forgiveness. I thought of it as something immediate: "I forgive, and that's it." At times, I also felt that forgiving meant forcing the heart, like an obligation I had to fulfil to be "good."

Over time, life itself – and God in it – taught me something different. Forgiveness is a deeply human act and it doesn't happen all at once. It grows and becomes more real over the years.

I also came to see that this more rigid view wasn't mine alone. Many of us were formed in a context where forgiveness was closely tied to guilt or obligation. It was often lived as a kind of sacrifice, sometimes even at one's own expense. Some older practices left more than one sister with the feeling that forgiveness meant being exposed. I'm thinking, for example, of public requests for forgiveness (culpae) that, instead of healing, sometimes caused harm.

I don't say this to judge the past, but because it's part of our history and something we still need to heal. When forgiveness is linked only to pain or

punishment, something of its Gospel truth becomes blurred.

Some time ago, in conversation with a priest, something became clear to me in a very simple way. He said that in the sacrament of reconciliation, we often still think in terms of "penance," as if after asking for forgiveness, we still have to "pay" for something. He proposed another way to look at it: to think in terms of "anti-sin."

That idea stayed with me. Because "anti-sin" isn't a punishment, it's a life-giving response. It means choosing, in a concrete way, to do something that is good for me, something that brings me back to a truer, freer place. Something that reaches the heart and begins to reorder it from within.

Since then, I've started to see that forgiveness is also about restoration. It's not just about recognising a mistake, but about letting something within me be put back in order.

There's a line in the Gospel that always challenges me: "Lord, how many times must I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answers, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). For a long time, I heard that as an impossible demand. Now I hear it as an invitation not to keep score.

That doesn't mean ignoring what happened. It doesn't mean pretending nothing hurt or excusing what was unjust.

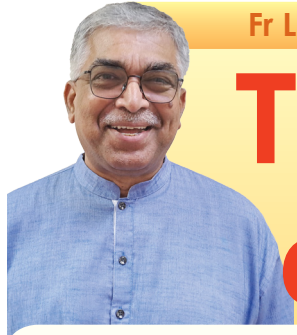
For me, forgiving has meant – and still means – choosing not to stay stuck in the wound. It means opening an inner door so resentment doesn't have the last word, and trusting that God can bring something new even out of what broke me.

In religious life, forgiveness has a concrete face: the sister I share my life with. That makes it more real, but also more demanding. It's easy to love humanity in the abstract; it's much harder to love a real person, with her gifts but also her limitations.

It's also important to learn to forgive parts of our own religious life that have shaped us: stages, communities, decisions and ways of acting. Some memories stay with us. Some experiences we handled as best we could at the time, but they don't always fully resolve. Some days everything flows. Other days, the heart closes a bit. It's important not to let it harden.

In the end, I believe forgiveness is a very concrete way of living charity. It shows in how we care for our relationships – even our relationship with our own story.

Little by little, I'm discovering that forgiveness also restores something in us – and that God gives back, in unexpected ways, a peace we thought we had lost, allowing us, again and again, to choose love and to be reconciled. **Sr Adriana Pérez, Global Sisters Report (NCR)**



Fr Leonard Lexson

The word “celebrate” and the loss of sacred music in the Eucharist

I recently took a trip to the far east and was overwhelmingly intrigued by the discipline and solemnity of the celebration of the Eucharist. The manner of celebration was one of total submission to the Lord. No fanfare and yet resplendent. The sacred music and sacred silence that bathed the liturgy was an experience to behold. While outside the cathedral was an orchestration of various reverberations of a world passing by swiftly, it was heavenly delight to sit in communion with believers glorifying God in and through the Liturgy.

A crisis in liturgical expression

Back home I feel we are at crossroads with the way we celebrate the Eucharist. While the liturgical text, prayers and actions are clearly laid out, we seem to digress with our choice of songs/hymns that are sung and the style of singing. A liturgical music crisis has developed over the last few decades. Being exposed to the secular style of music we limit ourselves to a narrow understanding of what celebration means when we assemble to participate in the source and summit of our Christian life.

The secular understanding of celebration often centres on human experience, achievement, and emotional fulfilment. A person celebrates his 21st birthday because he has reached a milestone in life. A nation celebrates independence because of liberation from colonial rule. Families celebrate weddings in joyful anticipation of new life together. These are meaningful occasions, but they remain fundamentally centred on human experience and human joy.

The Eucharist: A different order of celebration

The Eucharist, however, is of a different order entirely. The liturgy is not primarily about what we do for God, but about what God has done for us through the saving mystery of Christ. The Mass is not entertainment, performance, or mere fellowship; it is the worship of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art [for] it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy... [a] ministerial function in the service of the Lord. Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. SC #112.

The Church teaches that liturgical music should foster prayer, dignity and beauty giving Gregorian chant pride of place while ensuring other forms of music possess the sense of prayer, dignity and beauty. Why is this important?

Why sacred music matters

Liturgical music shapes prayer. When music resembles performance or concert styles it evokes sentiments that can deviate from liturgy's purpose of adoration; of lifting souls to God; fostering prayerful participation.

Liturgical music must be directed to the economy of salvation in the blessed Trinity. Our music is always addressed to God and not to self. If music distracts us from

adoration, then it does not belong at Mass.

Liturgical music must connect to the liturgical actions of the Eucharist. It is not inserted merely to fill silence, create atmosphere, or entertain the assembly. Every hymn, acclamation, chant, and response should arise from and serve the sacred action taking place at the altar. The Entrance Chant accompanies the gathering of God's people into worship; the Gloria becomes the Church's hymn of praise to the Father; the *Sanctus* unites the earthly liturgy with the worship of heaven; the *Agnus Dei* accompanies the breaking of the Bread; and Communion hymns foster prayerful union with Christ received in the Eucharist.

Sacred music as part of the liturgy

Sacred music therefore is not an accessory to the liturgy but part of the liturgy itself. Its purpose is to deepen participation in the mystery being celebrated and to direct hearts and minds towards God. Music that draws attention to performers, imitates secular entertainment, or reduces worship to emotional stimulation risks obscuring the sacred action of Christ made present in the Eucharist.

The question of sacred music ultimately leads to a deeper question: how do we celebrate the liturgy itself? Music cannot be separated from the overall spirit and manner of the Eucharistic celebration. The Church has long understood that the manner of celebrating the liturgy shapes the faith and spiritual disposition of the faithful. Sacred music, sacred silence, gestures, posture, and fidelity to the rites together form what the Church calls the *ars celebrandi* — the art of

celebrating the sacred mysteries well.

The *Ars Celebrandi*

In the “art of celebrating,” or *ars celebrandi*, true liturgical celebration involves reverence, discipline, beauty, and prayerful participation. It is not meant to be casual or self-centred. The priest, ministers, choir, and assembly each have distinct roles, yet every role serves a single purpose: the glorification of God and the sanctification of His people. Liturgy is not our invention. It is a gift from God to the Church and entrusted to the Church, shaped by Sacred Tradition, and ordered toward divine worship. When celebrated well, it leads the faithful to experience the glory and cross of Christ and find meaning to their purpose in life.

Heaven touching earth

As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* teaches, sacred music is most holy when it is closely united to the liturgical action itself, adding beauty to prayer and solemnity to the sacred rites. When liturgy is celebrated with reverence, sacred music, and sacred silence, the faithful are drawn beyond themselves into the mystery of Christ, where heaven touches earth and the Church becomes truly what she is called to be: a people gathered in worship before the living God.

Fr Leonard is the parish priest of the Church of the Assumption. He also serves as the ecclesiastical assistant to the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Liturgy Commission and is the chairperson of the Liturgical Music Committee of the Episcopal Regional Commission for Liturgy for Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

A mini treason

Thomas Merton once said that what he feared in his own life was not so much a massive betrayal of his vocation, but a series of *mini treasons* that lead to a different kind of death. And that's the peril that I fear too, for myself and for our culture.

Sixty years ago, Kay Cronin wrote a book entitled, *Cross in the Wilderness*, chronicling how, in 1847, a small band of Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate came from France to the American Pacific Northwest and, after some bitter setbacks in Washington State and Oregon, moved up the coast into Canada and helped found the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Vancouver and the Roman Catholic Church in significant parts of British Columbia's mainland.

She describes these men, no doubt with some over-idealisation and hagiography, as tough, totally dedicated, and completely without concern for their own comfort and health. They left their beloved France while still young, knew they would probably never see their loved ones again, and accepted to live constantly in danger both from the harsh elements of their frontier environment and from the threat of death from various Native tribes and various government forces and mercenary soldiers who distrusted them.

They were threatened many times,

chased out of various missions, some were kidnapped for periods of time, and a number of their houses and missions were burnt down. They lived perennially on the edge of danger, never secure, never free from threat.

Moreover, they had very little in terms of creature comforts. They lived in log or mud hovels and ate bad food. They had virtually no access to doctors, little access to what might make for good hygiene, and often, while travelling, had to sleep outside without proper shelter from rain and cold, causing many of them to develop rheumatism and other such illnesses at an early age. As well, they were never able to sink roots, to get comfortable at any place, to make the kinds of friends and contacts who could be a comfort and support to them. They had faith in God and each other, and little else.

But they were able to take all of this in stride without undue self-pity or complaint. They wrote positive and idealistic letters to their motherhouse in France and to their families and kept journals in which they expressed mostly joy about their modest successes in the ministry, seldom uttering a complaint about the bad housing, bad food, and instability in their lives.

As an Oblate missionary myself, as a member of the same religious family, I am proud of what these men did, and rightly

so. They were selfless to the point of death.

However, that being said, reading their story is also humbling. Looking at their radical sacrifice of all comfort is, for me, a mirror that I peer into with considerable trepidation and shame. I look at my own life and see far too much in the way of an addiction to comfort and safety. I don't want what they had: I want healthy food, clean water, proper hygiene, regular rest, access to good doctors, access to news and information, access to travel, regular contact with family and friends, opportunities for retreats and vacations, access to ongoing education, and, not least, I want safety. I want to be a good missionary, but I want to be comfortable and safe.

I take some consolation in the fact that today, times are much different than they were when these French missionaries landed in the Pacific Northwest. I couldn't do the work I do today, at least not for a very long, without proper housing, proper food, proper hygiene, access to education and information, regular rest, and healthy recreational outlets. My life and my ministry are a marathon, not a sprint, and proper self-care is a virtue, not a vice.

Still, it's easy to rationalise and become addicted to comfort and safety. St Paul, reflecting upon his own missionary life, once wrote that he was comfortable

with whatever was dealt to him — much or little. I like to believe that too for my own life; but, and this is true for most of us, the more we live with plenty, the more we tend to protect ourselves inside that cocoon.

As children of our culture, I believe we can easily become addicted to comfort and safety. Once we have grown used to safety, good food, clean water, proper hygiene, access to good doctors and proper medicine, access to constant entertainment, access to instant information, regular connection with our loved ones, boundless educational and recreational opportunities, and wonderful creature comforts of all sorts, the danger looms large that we will not easily, or at all, be able to let go of any of these.

Consequently, we can end up as good people, no big betrayals, though no big self-sacrifices either, good but not great, admiring the greatness of others from the comfort and safety of a snug armchair.

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

LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER

Dear children,

Today the Church celebrates Pentecost Sunday, which marks the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Did you know the word "Pentecost" means "fifty days"? Just like a pentagon has five sides because "pente" means five, Pentecost celebrates something

that happened fifty days later. Jesus died on the cross and rose again three days later, and promised to send the Holy Spirit to help His followers.

And guess what? Fifty days later, during Pentecost, Jesus kept His promise! The disciples were gathered together when suddenly:

A mighty wind filled the room. Flames appeared above their heads.

The Holy Spirit came upon them! The disciples became brave and joyful. They told people everywhere about Jesus. Pentecost reminds us that God gave the Holy Spirit, who comforts us, guides us, and helps

us through the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control.

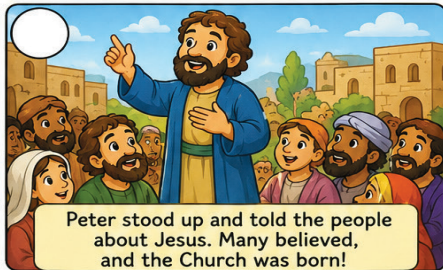
That is why Pentecost is called the Birthday of the Church. The Holy Spirit is God's special gift to you.

Love, Aunty C



Uh oh! The Pentecost story got mixed up!

Read each picture carefully and write the correct number in the empty circles to put the story back in order.



Memory Verse:
 "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit."
 - Acts 2:4

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Draw a line to match each fruit of the Spirit to the picture that shows it!

1	Love	•	•	
2	Joy	•	•	
3	Peace	•	•	
4	Patience	•	•	
5	Kindness	•	•	
6	Goodness	•	•	
7	Faithfulness	•	•	
8	Gentleness	•	•	
9	Self-control	•	•	



YOUTH



MJCCD 2

TAKE COURAGE! I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD

By Patrick Wong

Sometimes the most unexpected thing a retreat can do is slow you down.

Seventy-four Catholic students from universities and polytechnics across Melaka and Johor made their way to MAJODI Centre, Plentong, for the second Malacca Johore Catholics Campus Day (MJCCD 2). Two days, one night, one theme: *Take courage! I have overcome the world (John 16:33)*.

Nobody really comes into a retreat expecting to be caught off guard. And then, somehow, you always are.

The moment that caught me off guard

It was during Adoration.

The reflection was on the Parable of the Sower — the seed that falls on rocky ground, on the path, among thorns, on good soil. I had heard it before. Many times. The kind of passage you think you already know well enough that it stops doing anything to you.

But something about that room, that moment — it brought back an older memory. A younger version of me hearing the same words somewhere else, not quite understanding them yet. And sitting there, I realised I was hearing them differently now. Not because the words had changed. Because I had.

It is strange how something familiar can still find a way to reach you.

The line that stayed

One of the speakers said something that seemed simple at first:

You are a work in progress. This world is a work in progress. Everyone is a work in progress.

And then — God does not rush things. He rested on the seventh day, not because He was tired, but because rest is part of how something is made well.

I am someone who tends to rush. Anxiety does that — it makes you feel like if you are not forcing things forward, nothing will move. So, hearing that God Himself does

not operate that way was not exactly comfortable. Let God be God. Easy to say. Much harder to do.

Christus Vivit puts it well (CV 162): becoming a saint does not mean becoming a holier-looking version of yourself. It means becoming more fully, honestly, completely you — the person God had in mind when He made you. Not a photocopy of someone else's faith. Just you, more so.

Peter, and why he matters

If you needed proof that God works with imperfect people, Peter is your guy.

He is brash and impulsive. He says things before he thinks them through. He told Jesus he would die before ever denying Him — and then, a few hours later, denied Him three times before breakfast. He is, honestly, a mess.

And Jesus builds his Church on him.

There is a scene in John 21, after the Resurrection, that the retreat kept coming back to. Jesus has cooked breakfast on the shore. And then, three times, He asks Peter: "Do you 'agape' me?" — the word for total, unconditional love. Three times, Peter can only honestly answer with "philio" — the love between friends. Real, but smaller.

Jesus accepts it every time. And then commissions him anyway.

Peter did not have to become someone else first. He had to trust what he had, and the rest grew from there.

New faces, and the weight of almost leaving

Something I did not expect from this retreat was how it felt to walk into a room full of people I had never seen before.

As a senior who is close to graduating, that hit differently. These were students who came after me, who will still be here long after I am gone. And looking around at all those new faces, I felt reluctant to leave. A fondness for something you are not quite ready to let go of. Not quite sadness, but close enough.

I did not realise how much this community had become part of me until I was standing at the edge of leaving it.

The campfire, the rain, and everything in between

The night before it ended, everyone sat together for a long sharing session. There were stories that made you want to lean in. Stories that were hard to sit with. By the end of it, somehow, the room felt lighter than when it started.

Then came the games. It rained halfway through — naturally — and nobody really cared. Everyone just moved under the rooftops and kept going. There was something quietly joyful about that. University students, stress temporarily set aside, just playing in the rain.

And MAJODI, as always, took good care of everyone. The food, the space, the way the place just feels like it was built for exactly this kind of gathering. It never gets old.

What you carry out

The retreat closed with the bishop's homily — two reflections that tied everything together without wrapping it up too neatly.

The first was from John 14. The Way, the Truth, the Life — not as a list of doctrines to memorise, but as three ways of knowing: know the Father, learn to recognise what is false, know the breath and fire that moves through all people and all of creation. Before you can become yourself, you need to know who you are pointed toward.

The second came from the Footprints global research on Young Believers. The finding was simple but worth saying out loud: young people of faith bring something into the world that is genuinely needed — hope, civic engagement, a sense that work means something beyond just getting by. They show up. For their communities, for causes bigger than themselves, for each other.

The bishop ended with four words: "Not me, but we."

After two days of being told that who you are right now is already enough — the last thing said was a reminder that becoming yourself is not the point on its own. It is the beginning of being useful to everyone around you.



KUALA LUMPUR: What began as a collaboration between two parish youth communities became a beautiful witness of unity, faith and friendship as youth from the Church of the Risen Christ and Church of St Joseph gathered for a three-day rally recently.

More than simply a joint programme, the rally became a lived expression of the theme *In One We Are One*, as young people from both parishes journeyed together as one body in Christ. Held at the Church of St Joseph (SJC), the gathering created a space where strangers slowly became friends, differences faded, and hearts opened to God and one another.

The rally was organised in close partnership with the youth leaders of SJC, especially Teren, whose support and cooperation helped shape the flow of the programme. Over the three days, the parish grounds became more than just a venue — it became a shared home where faith, laughter, conversations and prayer brought the two communities closer together.

The rally began on a Friday evening with Holy Mass, followed by dinner and a praise and worship session that invited participants to slow down and encounter God's presence more deeply. It was also during the opening night that the youths introduced "Jesus Mail", a simple yet powerful initiative that would become one of the most meaningful experiences of the rally.

IN ONE WE ARE ONE

Youth rally strengthens unity in Christ

Through "Jesus Mail", participants anonymously wrote messages to one another throughout the gathering — words of encouragement, prayers, Scripture verses, affirmations and notes of gratitude. Though simple in form, the activity became a powerful reminder that God often speaks through people, and that even the smallest gesture can bring comfort, healing and hope.

The evening continued with a talk by Fr Stephen Jayard, who encouraged the youths to remain open to God's work in their lives and in the people around them.

The second day was filled with talks, reflections, praise and worship, helping participants remain grounded in prayer and fellowship. In



the evening, youths from both parishes came together to animate the Holy Mass, reflecting unity not only in presence but also in service. Shared meals and fellowship afterwards

further strengthened the growing bonds of friendship and community.

The final day began with breakfast and concluded with a final session of praise and worship, bringing the rally to a close in a spirit of gratitude, peace and reflection.

For many participants, "Jesus Mail" became one of the deepest encounters of the rally. Some received words that felt like answers to silent prayers, while others found encouragement at moments they needed it most. Through these messages, many were reminded that God sees every heart and continues to speak His love, truth and hope through others.

In the end, the rally became far more than a series of activities or scheduled sessions. It became a reminder that unity in Christ is not merely spoken about, but lived out through love, humility, prayer and shared faith.



Turn faith and compassion into action

THAILAND: The Diocese of Surat Thani concluded its sixth annual "iMind Youth Camp" with a call for young Catholics to become "leaders of love" by serving the poor, protecting human dignity, and bringing hope to society through acts of compassion.

Held at the Cathedral of Archangel Raphael in southern Thailand, the weeklong "6th Annual Youth Camp for Disciples of Christ and Evangelisation" gathered 66 participants, including priests, religious sisters and brothers, youth coordinators, and 43 Catholic youth representatives from 13 parishes across the diocese.

Under the theme "iMind: Beloved to Love," the camp focused on helping young people recognise God's love and transform that experience into meaningful action for others, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Drawing inspiration from Church teachings on Christian love, the program encouraged participants to deepen their faith while developing leadership rooted in compassion, service, and social responsibility.

The camp opened with interactive formation activities at a public park, where participants joined a "Walk Rally" centred on themes of love, unity, and hope. Through teamwork exercises, obstacle challenges, and creative digital media projects, the youth explored how Christian values can be lived out in daily life.

Catholic youth participants interact with elderly residents during an outreach activity organised as part of the "iMind Youth Camp" in Surat Thani province, southern Thailand.

A major highlight of the gathering came on the second day, when Bishop Paul Trairong Multree of Surat Thani presided over

a thanksgiving Mass and challenged participants to make God's love visible through service to others.

The bishop stressed that love for God cannot be separated from love for the poor.

"God dwells in the least of these," he told the young people, emphasising that caring for the marginalised is not merely an optional charitable activity but "a fundamental mission" of every Christian.

He urged the youth to make the Church a true "home" and "sign of hope" for all people, especially those forgotten or abandoned by society.

Using the example of Francis of Assisi, Bishop Paul highlighted humility, simplicity, and solidarity with the poor as essential elements of authentic Christian discipleship.

The bishop concluded his reflection with a series of questions for the participants: "Are we aware that we are loved? When we know we are loved, how can we love others? And today, how will we take action?"

The camp's strongest impact came through

outreach activities across Surat Thani province, where participants put their learning into practice through acts of mercy and community service.

The youth visited bedridden patients and elderly residents, distributing food and essential supplies to a dozen households. They also organised recreational activities for elderly people at the provincial social development centre and brought joy to local children through games and community programs.

Government agencies and Christian groups in the area supported the outreach initiatives.

In the evenings, participants joined Taizé prayer services and received the sacrament of reconciliation, fostering moments of silence, healing, and spiritual renewal.

The camp concluded with a closing Mass presided over by Fr Arkadech Tapping, chairman of the diocesan pastoral commission, who presented Carlo Acutis as a model for modern youth.



He reminded participants that Carlo Acutis became holy not through extraordinary achievements but by "doing ordinary things with extraordinary love."

Quoting the young Italian blessed, Fr Arkadech challenged participants to remain faithful to their unique identity in a world shaped by comparison and imitation.

"Everyone is born original. Sadly, many die as mere copies," he said.

Following the Mass, participants prayed before the relics of Carlo Acutis, entrusting their mission and future to his intercession.

As the camp ended, the young delegates returned to their parishes carrying the message printed on their camp shirts: to remain mindful of human dignity, mindful of compassionate presence, and mindful that Christ is hidden in every vulnerable person they encounter.

Organisers said the camp aimed not only to strengthen faith but also to form a new generation of Catholic youth capable of becoming witnesses of hope and agents of transformation in Thai society. **Chainarong Monthienvichienchai, LiCAS News**



Bishop Dominic Su remembered for life of humble service

Christina Lazaroo

SIBU: The Church in Malaysia gives thanks for the life, witness and faithful ministry of Bishop Emeritus Dominic Su Haw Chiu, who was called home to the Lord on May 15, 2026.

Born in Sibiu, Sarawak, on May 26, 1939, he was a humble and faithful shepherd who devoted decades of his life to the service of God and His people.

The funeral Mass for Bishop Dominic was celebrated on May 16 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, where clergy, religious and faithful gathered in prayer and thanksgiving for a shepherd whose life touched countless hearts.

From a young age, he discerned a vocation to the priesthood and began his seminary formation at St Francis Xavier's Minor Seminary in Singapore before continuing his philosophical and theological studies at College General in Penang. He was ordained a deacon on April 28, 1969, and later ordained to the priesthood on Dec 4, 1969, by Bishop Charles Reiterer. His thirst for deeper service to the Church later brought him to Rome, where he pursued studies in Canon Law at the Pontifical Urbaniana University.

In 1986, Pope John Paul II appointed him the first bishop of the newly established Diocese of Sibiu. Consecrated bishop in Rome on Jan 6, 1987, Bishop Dominic would shepherd the diocese for the next 24 years, guiding the faithful with pastoral wisdom, compassion and a fatherly heart.

He was never a man who sought attention or recognition. Rather, he became known for his quiet strength, prayerful spirit and closeness to ordinary people. Priests, religious and laity alike encountered in him a shepherd who listened patiently, encouraged gently and carried the burdens of others with compassion.

Beyond the Diocese of Sibiu, Bishop Dominic also served the wider Church through his role as president of the Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei



Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Health Care, reflecting his deep concern for the sick, elderly and suffering. Even in his own frailty and declining health, he remained a witness of serene faith and graceful endurance.

After his retirement in December 2011 due to health reasons, Bishop Dominic continued residing in Sibiu, where he remained a cherished father figure to both the clergy and the faithful. His successor, Bishop Joseph Hii Teck Kwong, had himself been ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Dominic — a

testament to the legacy of leadership and mentorship he leaves behind.

His episcopal motto, *Laudetur Dominus* ("Praise be to the Lord"), was not merely a phrase, but the very spirit by which he lived. Through decades of devoted service, Bishop Dominic became an enduring pillar of the Church in Malaysia, especially in Sarawak, where generations of faithful were touched by his kindness, humility and pastoral care.

As Cardinal Sebastian Francis beautifully reflected, Bishop Dominic was truly "a humble and Spirit-filled shepherd" who "suffered gracefully and inspired us on how to prepare ourselves to die in a state of grace."

Though he has departed from this earthly life, his witness continues to inspire the Church he loved so deeply. As the Church in Malaysia prepares to gather in Sibiu for the first Malaysia Pastoral Convention in September 2026, it is especially meaningful that the city he once shepherded will become a place of encounter, prayer and discernment for the nation's Catholics.

May Bishop Emeritus Dominic Su now rest in the eternal embrace of the Good Shepherd whom he served so faithfully throughout his life.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



Bishop Dominic Su (right) during the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Joseph Hii on May 1, 2008. (HERALD filepic)

MEMORIAM

For enquiries, please contact:
Email: memoriam@herald.com.my
Tel: 03-2026 8291

With Love We Remember



18th Anniversary
T. Francis Xavier
Departed: 01-04-2008



9th Anniversary
P. Flora Queen
Departed: 17-03-2017



8th Anniversary
Stella James Pasangna
Departed: 06-05-2018

*Our parents that we love don't go away,
They continue to walk with us every day.
Unseen, unheard, yet always near,
Still loved, still missed, and forever dear.*

Fondly remembered by children & grandchildren.

3rd Anniversary In Loving Memory of



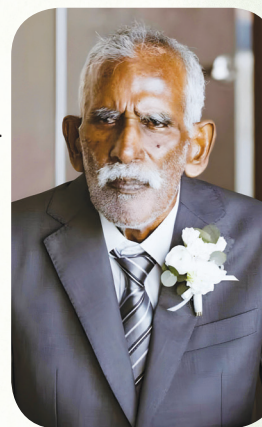
Girly Pereira - Grogan
10.2.1949-25.5.2023

*In life we loved you dearly,
in death we love you still. In
our hearts you will always
hold a special place.*
Deeply loved and missed by
husband Patrick James
Grogan, Siblings,
family and relatives.

1st Anniversary

Matthews Patrick
**7th December 1950 –
30th May 2025**

1st Death Anniversary
Memorial Mass
will be celebrated at
the Church of St
Michael, Alor Setar,
Kedah on Saturday,
30th May 2026
at 7.30pm.



Lovingly missed by
Wife: Maria Goretti Felon
Children: Barbara Ann, Magdalene Ann & Daniel Barth,
Peter Steven, Michael Matthew.
*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord and let the perpetual
light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.*

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No 48, Jln Anggerik Doritis 31/128, Kota Kemuning, Section 31, 40460, Shah Alam, Selangor **REST IN PEACE**

Buddhists and Christians for an Unarmed and Disarming peace

Dear Buddhist Friends,

As in years past, we are pleased to extend our heartfelt greetings and good wishes on the joyful celebration of Wesak. This momentous festival — commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha—serves as an invitation to renew the path of wisdom, compassion, and peace.

Peace is not merely the absence of war, but a gift that seeks to dwell within the human heart: a quiet yet powerful presence that enlightens and transforms. Indeed, as Pope Leo XIV noted, “Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. It has the gentle power to enlighten and expand our understanding; it resists and overcomes violence. Peace is a breath of the eternal: while to evil we cry out *Enough*, to peace we whisper *Forever* (Message for the LIX World Day of Peace, January 1, 2026). Even when it appears fragile — like a small flame threatened by the storms of hatred and fear — peace must be protected and nurtured. This is the peace to which we are called: an unarmed and disarming peace that does not rely on force, but flows from truth, compassion, and mutual trust.

In our time, however, we cannot ignore

the shadows weighing upon the world. Wars, violence, rising ethno-religious nationalism, and the manipulation of religion continue to wound our common humanity. In a world that appears increasingly fragile and at times marked by a troubling sense of regression, the call to peace becomes ever more urgent. It is here that our spiritual traditions can offer a vital contribution. Goodness is truly disarming; it breaks the cycle of suspicion and opens paths where none seemed possible. At their best, our traditions invite us to purify our hearts of hostility, to transcend boundaries, and to recognise one another as members of a single human family.

In this light, the sayings of the Buddha offer an insightful path. The Buddha teaches: “Hatred is never appeased by hatred; by non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is an eternal law” (*Dhammapada* 5). And again: “Let none deceive another or despise any being... Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another” (*Sutta Nipata* 1.8 - *Metta Sutta*). For Christians, Jesus calls his disciples to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” (Matthew 5:44) and proclaims, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9). Both

traditions converge in pointing toward a peace that is lived—one that disarms hearts before it disarms hands.

Such a path calls for more than words; it requires a conversion of attitudes and a commitment to concrete action. Religious leaders are called to be authentic partners in dialogue and true agents of reconciliation. Together with all believers, we are invited to become artisans of peace — not passive observers, but courageous witnesses capable of fostering encounter, healing wounds, and rebuilding trust.

As citizens and believers, we share a responsibility to promote peace, challenge injustice, and urge those in positions of authority not to inflame division but to pursue dialogue over confrontation. We must also guard against becoming complicit through silence or fear. Each community is thus called to grow as a place where hostility is overcome through encounter, where justice is practiced, and where forgiveness is cherished.

To foster an unarmed and disarming peace also means nurturing its deepest sources: prayer, contemplation, and inner transformation. It is a peace lived daily—in gestures

of kindness, in patience, in the refusal of hatred and vengeance, and in the courage to hope. For peace is not an illusion or a distant ideal; it is a real possibility already placed within our reach, waiting to be welcomed and shared.

In this spirit, we renew our hope that, through our common commitment, Buddhists and Christians may increasingly become witnesses of this disarming peace — one that heals wounds, restores relationships, and opens new horizons for humanity.

May your celebration of Wesak be filled with serenity and joy, and may it inspire all of us to walk together on this path. We wish you a blessed and fruitful celebration of Wesak!

From the Vatican, May 1, 2026

George
George Jacob Card. Koovakad
Prefect

Janakaratu
Msgr Indunil Janakaratu Kodithuwakku
Kankanamalage
Secretary

Pope Leo prays at St John Paul II shooting site on Fátima feast

VATICAN: In an unexpected gesture as he was greeting people at the general audience in St Peter’s Square on May 13, Pope Leo XIV stopped at the exact spot where, 45 years ago, St John Paul II was shot in an assassination attempt.

Pope Leo got out of the vehicle and remained in silence to pray before the white marble plaque marking the place where the Polish pope was struck by four gunshots fired by the Turkish gunman Ali Agca on May 13, 1981. The pontiff then knelt and touched the



Pope Leo XIV touches the plaque marking the spot in St Peter’s Square where St John Paul II was shot in an assassination attempt on May 13, 1981. (Vatican Media)

plaque before continuing his ride around the square.

The attack on John Paul II coincided with the anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady to three shepherd children in Fátima, Portugal.

Days after the attempt on his life, while still recovering, John Paul II read the third part of the secret of Fátima, until then known only to the popes and later made public. Written by one of the seers, Sr Lucia, it describes the vision of the Holy Father “afflicted with pain and sorrow,” praying “for the souls of the corpses he met on his way.”

Pope John Paul II never ceased to express his gratitude to the Virgin Mary for saving his life. “One hand fired; another guided the bullet,” he said in an interview with the French writer André Frossard. After being discharged from the hospital and resuming general audiences in St Peter’s Square following five months of hospitalisation, he also said he had experienced “the extraordinary maternal protection which proved stronger than the deadly projectile.”


In 1982, St John Paul II celebrated Mass in Fátima and consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On May 13, 2000, he beatified the shepherd children Francisco and Jacinta at the Portuguese shrine.

Today, Pope Leo XIV wanted to underscore that the attempt on John Paul II’s life was not fatal “thanks to the protection of Our Lady, as he himself confirmed in many ways.”

For this reason, he explained, he dedicated his May 13 catechesis to “the Virgin Mary, model of the Church” and to his predecessor, whose motto was *Totus Tuus*. EWTN News

2026 DEPARTURES

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If you want to see how wonderful the world is, travel it.
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