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HERALD

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Mission Statement

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

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
1 John 3:1



Caring for those who care for others
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Listening with care, visiting with compassion
■ P8



Miri at 50: **Rooted in faith, renewed for mission**
■ P12

Faith needs more than CATECHISM



VATICAN: Passing on faith requires more than religious instruction: it calls for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, nurtured within families and a living Christian community, a new Vatican document says.

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith is urging renewed evangelisation centred on Christ's saving love, with greater attention to adults alongside the catechesis of children and teenagers.

Its document, *Venite ad Me: Considerations on the Transmission of the Faith in an Epochal Change,* published on October 22, warns that faith can no longer be assumed to pass automatically from one generation to the next.

At the heart of its appeal is the *kerygma* — the essential proclamation of Christ's saving love and living presence.

Drawing on Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium,* it recalls: "Jesus Christ loves you; He gave His life to save you; and now He is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you."

This proclamation must help people recognise that God's love and mercy are personally addressed to them. It requires language that speaks to their lives, supported by relationships and credible Christian witness.

The document places these concerns within profound cultural changes. Secularisation, growing individualism and the tendency to confine religion to private life have weakened traditional ways of nurturing faith. Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are also reshaping communication and human relationships.

Within this changing landscape, the family remains the first and most essential setting for passing on faith. Yet the document acknowledges that this process has been interrupted in many parts of the world.

Particularly in countries with a long Christian tradition, many baptised adults lack a meaningful relationship with the Church and no longer experience the consolation of faith. Young people may participate in parish life but enter adulthood largely indifferent to religion.

"The transmission of the faith today requires, in a particular way, the evangelisation of adults and a move beyond pastoral ministry focused solely on the catechesis of children and adolescents," the document states.

It calls for a renewal of catechesis rooted in the central proclamation of the Gospel, helping people develop a lasting relationship with Christ.

Faith, it explains, is handed on through gradual participation in Christian community life. Teaching doctrine forms part of this wider experience of prayer, worship, relationships and service.

The challenge also extends beyond bringing people into the Church. Even in highly secularised societies experiencing an increase in conversions and returns to Catholic practice, some newly baptised Catholics soon drift into practical indifference.

Communities therefore need to rediscover their responsibility to welcome and accompany new believers as they learn to live their faith.

Among the document's practical recommendations are regular parish groups dedicated to listening to, reflecting on, sharing and praying with Scripture, complementing participation in the Sunday Eucharist.

The liturgy is presented as a privileged place for encountering Christ's saving love. Believers are also called to make that love visible through holiness, closeness to others and a preferential concern for the poor.

Well-prepared homilies, popular devotions, pilgrimages, art and music can help communicate faith. Voluntary service offers opportunities for people, particularly the young, to draw closer to the life of the Church.

The text further highlights the importance of inculturation — allowing the Gospel to take root within people's cultures — and calls for wider opportunities for women to participate in leading ecclesial processes.

Approved by Pope Leo XIV on August 21, the eight-chapter document draws on contributions from bishops' conferences and personal testimonies from people who discovered or rediscovered Christ.

Presented as a set of considerations, it encourages pastoral reflection and concrete responses within local Churches, while leaving room for further analysis and development.

Taking its title from Jesus' invitation, "Come to me", the document calls the faithful back to the heart of Christian faith and their shared responsibility to proclaim it.

"It is now up to us to pass on this same gift to the men and women of our time," it urges. **Adapted from Vatican News**

● ***To read the full document go to: https://shorturl.at/CNSwK***

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Don't forget to include captions that bring your images to life.
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From the Editor's Desk

The courage to question

Young people learn what integrity costs by watching how we treat those who speak up. When an uncomfortable question draws intimidation, the lesson reaches far beyond the person who asked it.

Universiti Malaya student Ummi Umairah Bakhit raised such a question at the International Young Future Leaders Summit, held at the World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur from October 11–13, 2026. She challenged public donations to help former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak pay a RM50 million court-imposed fine.

The appeal followed a conditional royal pardon allowing Najib to serve the remainder of his prison sentence at home, subject to payment of the fine and other conditions. It has raised ethical questions about accountability, compassion and equal treatment.

Ummi's language was provocative and open to criticism. Her questions nevertheless deserve a substantive answer. She has since reported online harassment and threats, which Communications Minister Datuk Seri Fahmi Fadzil has condemned.

Defending her right to question does not require agreement with every word she used. It requires recognising that intimidation has no legitimate place in public debate.

Donors, too, deserve fairness. Voluntary giving does not automatically signify approval of wrongdoing, and individual motives should not be presumed. But a public appeal involving a former national leader is open to scrutiny. Citizens are entitled to examine the message it sends about responsibility and justice.

Catholic social teaching provides a clear foundation. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* warns that political corruption betrays moral principles and social justice, undermines institutions and obstructs the common good (411).

The damage reaches ordinary households. Misused public resources can mean fewer services and opportunities for people who depend on them. Accountability therefore concerns the welfare of citizens, especially those with little influence over decisions affecting their lives.

Christian compassion belongs in this discussion. Every person retains human dignity, including someone convicted of wrongdoing. Humane treatment and the possibility of rehabilitation matter.

Mercy also takes seriously the harm suffered by others. In the Gospel encounter with Zacchaeus, Jesus' welcome is accompanied by the tax collector's commitment to generosity and restitution (Luke 19:1–10). Compassion, conversion and repairing injustice belong together.

Applied to public life, this asks us to care about both the individual facing punishment and the communities affected by wrongdoing. We must resist allowing personal loyalty to eclipse concern for justice.

That standard must hold across political loyalties. Would we defend the same conduct, or support the same appeal, if a different leader were involved? Gratitude for past contributions cannot cancel accountability. Equally, allegations must not be confused with convictions. Evidence, due process and established findings must guide our judgements.

St Paul's call to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) gives both speaker and listener a responsibility. Criticism should be accurate and respect human dignity. Those receiving it should address its substance. Acknowledging an unhelpful phrase need not mean surrendering a legitimate concern; objecting to that phrase cannot justify harassment.

The *Catechism* describes fortitude as firmness amid difficulties and perseverance in pursuing the good (1808). Courage can mean speaking while afraid, supported by an informed conscience and a willingness to be corrected.

Most of us face quieter tests: questioning an unexplained expense, refusing a dishonest instruction or challenging an unfair decision. We know how tempting silence becomes when speaking could cost us acceptance or opportunity.

People who raise concerns need more than praise for their bravery. They need institutions prepared to listen and protect them from retaliation. Universities should welcome reasoned disagreement. Public figures should answer legitimate questions. Credible threats deserve investigation, regardless of political allegiance.

The Church must practise the same openness. Parishioners should be able to ask how funds are used. Volunteers should be able to raise concerns without being labelled disloyal. Our calls for transparency carry weight when our own institutions welcome scrutiny.

Respect for leadership includes expecting leaders to account for their stewardship. Teaching young people this responsibility prepares them to exercise authority conscientiously themselves.

The response to Ummi will teach other young Malaysians something about the society they are being invited to serve. They will notice whether adults engage with difficult questions, whether institutions offer protection and whether principles survive political loyalty.

If we want a generation that stands for integrity, we must be willing to stand beside those who practise it, including when their questions make us uncomfortable.

Patricia Pereira

Dare to be holy

Today's world disdains holiness. This is evident in much of what we see around us, from movies and dramas to social media clips. There is a clear reversal of roles. Lucifer, or the devil, is often portrayed as charismatic, the anti-hero whom we are invited to admire, while revered angels such as Michael and Gabriel are cast as the 'bad guys', rebels against God and bad influences on humanity. This shift can be traced, in part, to the countercultural revolution of the late 1960s. It has gradually permeated our homes through television and, more recently, social media, readily accessible through our devices. For now, it seems, it is cooler to be rebellious, and you are no fun at parties if you talk about goodness, God and all things churchy. Why be holy when you can be bad and get applauded for it?

So, what happened? I think this shift came partly from a misplaced desire to find role models for goodness and partly from a growing lack of trust in authority. The 1960s saw wars, social upheaval and widespread mistrust of governments and established institutions. Some of this distrust was justified, as authority has not always been exercised responsibly. Today, with media more accessible, people have greater freedom to choose what information they believe. Consequently, what was traditionally held in high regard can now be dismissed as archaic or untrustworthy.

But if we are looking for heroes and heroines to inspire us towards goodness, Christians need look no further than the holy men and women of our Church. Their stories reveal extraordinary courage in overcoming hardships and trials, even in the face of evil and death. They were, in a sense, the original rebels: those who stood against the world's powers and tyrannies, remaining faithful to God through their words and deeds. Some laid down their lives in the service of others; many willingly embraced martyrdom rather than abandon their faith.

These are the men and women whose lives reflect the teaching Jesus gave His disciples in the Beatitudes. The world may admire the rich, powerful and influential, but Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart and persecuted for the sake of righteousness. He turns the world's understanding of greatness upside down. Holiness is not about winning applause, gaining recognition or appearing perfect. It is about belonging to God and allowing His grace to transform the way we live.

The saints remind us that holiness is not reserved for a select few with extraordinary gifts. They were human beings who struggled, suffered and made sacrifices. What distinguished them was not that they were without weakness, but that they continued to respond to God's call. Their lives remind us that holiness is not an impossible ideal but a journey of conversion, sustained by God's grace.

In the second reading, St John tells us that we are already children of God, even though the fullness of what we shall become has not yet been revealed. Holiness begins with this identity. We do not become holy simply by trying harder to be good. Rather, we grow in holiness as we receive God's love, allow it to shape our hearts and learn to love others as He loves us.

The Solemnity of All Saints is therefore not merely a day to remember those who have gone before us. It is also a celebration of our own calling. The saints are not distant figures to be admired from afar, nor simply names on the calendar or statues in our churches. They are witnesses who show us what a life transformed by God's love can look like. Their example challenges us to live differently, even when doing so makes us unpopular.

Perhaps the world does not need more rebels for the sake of rebellion. It needs people courageous enough to stand for what is good, truthful and just; people who choose mercy over revenge, humility over pride, and love over hatred. It needs Christians willing to be different, not to draw attention to themselves, but because they belong to Christ.

So, on this feast of All Saints, let us ask ourselves: What kind of people are we becoming? Are we simply following whatever the world applauds, or are we willing to walk the path Jesus has shown us? The call to holiness is not a call to escape the world, but to transform it through the way we live.

The world may not always applaud holiness. But we do not live for the world's applause. We live for the day when, by God's grace, we will join the great multitude standing before His throne, worshipping Him and sharing in the fullness of His love. Until then, may the saints inspire us, the Beatitudes guide us, and Christ lead us ever closer to the holiness to which we are all called.

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Deacon Ashley Stephen Chau

All Saints (A)

Readings: Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3: 1-3;
Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

DIOCESE OF MALACCA JOHORE
CHAN/LN/2026/006

Clergy appointments, transfers, retirement and study leave

His Lordship, Rt Rev Bernard Paul, DD, Bishop of Malacca Johore Diocese, announces the following clergy appointments, transfers and changes in ministry.

These appointments take effect from January 11, 2027, unless otherwise specified.

South Johor Vicariate

1. ***Msgr Peter Ng Lai Huat*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru.
2. ***Fr Lionel Itheraj T.L.*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru.
3. ***Friar Cosmas Francis, OFM,*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Johor Bahru.
4. ***Fr Patrick Tyoh Kai Hong*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of Christ the King, Kulai.
5. ***Fr Devadasan Madala Muthu*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of Christ the King, Kulai.
6. ***Fr Moses Rayappan*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram.
7. ***Friar Francis Go Sheau Peng, OFMCap,*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram.
8. ***Friar Claurence Motoyou, OFM,*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Theresa, Masai.
9. ***Friar Aiden Peter Jr, OFM,*** is appointed Priest in Residence at the Church of St Theresa, Masai.
10. ***Fr Edward Rayappan*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Joseph, Plentong.
11. ***Fr Paul Wong Poh Loke*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of St Joseph, Plentong.

North Central Johor Vicariate

12. ***Fr Neville Arul Sinnappah*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Henry, Batu Pahat.
13. ***Fr Joseph Heng Chon Sin*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Louis, Kluang.
14. ***Deacon Gabriel Puvaneswaran Pillai*** is assigned to the Church of St Louis, Kluang, to assist the Parish Priest in diaconal ministry, with effect from ***November 1, 2026***.
15. ***Fr Aaron Alammalay*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Philip, Segamat.
16. ***Fr Louis Chin Soon Teck*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of St Philip, Segamat.
17. ***Fr John Baptist Yoew Kah Chok*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Andrew, Muar.
18. ***Fr Leo Elias*** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of the Church of St Andrew, Muar.

Melaka Vicariate

19. ***Fr James Rajendran*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Francis Xavier, Melaka.
20. ***Fr Paul Sia Chau Kiang*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Peter, Melaka.
21. ***Fr Jason Wong Kok Cheak*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong.
22. ***Fr Matthew Bun Chang Yong*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak.
23. ***Fr Adrian Francis*** is appointed Parish Priest of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Jasin.

Appointment to the Marriage Tribunal

24. ***Fr Damian Charles Pereira*** is appointed Associate Judicial Vicar with effect from ***November 1, 2026.*** He will assume responsibility for the Marriage Tribunal of the Malacca Johore Diocese, succeeding Fr Anthony Nge Lee Kiang.

Retirement from Active Ministry

25. ***Fr Anthony Nge Lee Kiang*** will retire from active ministry at the age of 78, after many years of faithful priestly service with effect from November 1, 2026. He will reside at Graceville, in the accommodation for retired priests. The diocese expresses its gratitude for his dedicated service to the Church, particularly his work in the Marriage Tribunal.

Pastoral Associates

26. ***Deacon Offic Joseph*** is appointed as Pastoral Associate for the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Pontian.
27. ***Deacon Arama Das*** is appointed Pastoral Associate for the Migrant Catholic Community at Kelapa Sawit.
28. ***Deacon Steven Wong*** is appointed Pastoral Associate for the Church of St Joseph, Bukit Batu.
29. ***Deacon Louis Martin*** is appointed Pastoral Associate for the Church of St Peter, Mersing.
30. ***Deacon Anthony Chua*** is appointed Pastoral Associate for the Bahasa Malaysia community at Kem Terendak.

The Pastoral Associates will serve under the authority and pastoral responsibility of their respective Parish Priests, according to the ministry proper to deacons and the responsibilities entrusted to them by the bishop.

Study Leave and Conclusion of Service

31. ***Fr Alexuchelvam Mariasoosai*** will be on study leave with effect from February 1, 2027.
32. ***Fr Martinian Lee Hock Chuan*** will be on study leave with effect from February 1, 2027.
33. ***Friar Sixtus Pitah, OFM,*** will conclude his service in the Malacca Johore Diocese upon the expiry of his contract and will proceed on study leave.

Respectfully,

Rev Fr Dr Lawrence Ng Yew Kim
Chancellor
Malacca Johore Diocese
October 21, 2026

KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

November

2	All Soul's Day Mass & Blessing – Cheras Cemetery
8	50th Anniversary Celebration of Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu
16	EXCO Meeting – Christian Federation of Malaysia

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

November

2	Mass – All Souls' Day at Catholic Cemetery, Ulu Tiram
6-9	INE-Catholic Leaders Evangelisation Seminar – MAJODI Centre
9-14	South Korea Pilgrimage – Footprints of the Korean Martyrs
15-17	1st Annual General Meeting – Caritas Malaysia, CCM, Petaling Jaya



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #292

F12 MJD NEWS UPDATES

Welcome dear friends,

MJD prepares for the ***post MPC 2026*** pastoral thrust. After many months of dialogue, a major ***clergy transfer*** will take place on January 11, 2027, on the Monday after the Baptism of the Lord. The November-December months are for the ***"handing over-taking over"*** exercise.

Besides the mentioned, coming next are the ***Diocesan Pastoral Council*** and following is ***Diocesan Annual Pastoral Assembly.*** Our option for the year 2027-28 is ***Conversion and Evangelisation.***

Local Takes! Cannot Fool Everybody All The Time

The PM announced a total ban on the ***navigation app Waze*** for all Malaysian civil servants, citing its Israeli origin and its alleged control, for the local ***TuJu navigation app*** as an alternative.

The ***haze impacted*** schools, outdoor activities and even caused respiratory distress in animals or pets.

Ummi, the courageous UM student called donations for the former PM linked to the 1MDB corruption case the "stupidest thing I have watched in my entire life".

Despite installing CCTVs, police entering schools and having more counsellors, ***5,681 bullying cases*** were reported between January and August this year.

Reading the Signs: Seeing the Unseeable.

Fides, a news agency, released statistics on the Catholic Church, with 1.422 billion members, representing 17.8 per cent of the world's population.

Africa has overtaken Europe in the number of Catholics, which is a historic shift.

For the first time in five years, the worldwide number of ***Catholic priests*** is on the rise.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell remarked: "In the face of the fragility experienced by families, ***Amoris Laetitia*** invited us to give priority to listening, to avoid judging too quickly, and to allow ourselves to be surprised by the action of God's grace in their lives."

Thought for the Week: The Triple Test

One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher, Socrates and said, "Do you know what I just heard about your friend?" "Hold on a minute," Socrates replied. "Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say. That's why I call it the triple filter test.

The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "Well, no," the man said, "actually I just heard about it and…. "All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not.

The second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?" "Umm, no, on the contrary. "So," Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about my friend, but you're not certain it's true.

There's a third filter — the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?" "No, not really."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true, nor good, nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?"

Lesson from Socrates: How often, what we don't know, what we are not certain or what is not useful, we pass them on to others as authenticated. Did we stop to check if is true, good or useful? ***Unfiltered speech is useless speech.***

QnQ? Q asks: Do we have to be courageous to be holy?

Holiness is Joined with Courage. The Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist that holiness is not only private purity but ***public courage.***

He lived simply, spoke truth boldly, and offered his life as a witness to the coming Christ. Vatican II *(Lumen Gentium 42)* honours martyrs as the highest witness to holiness: The ***love for Christ was stronger*** than the fear of death.

In life, holiness without courage can become timid; courage without holiness can become harsh. John unites both, showing us that ***sanctity is faithfulness to God in body, heart, and witness.***

The Spirit @ work: "True fulfilment is not achieved by eliminating weakness but through harmonious growth." ***Pope Leo XIV***

Something to tickle you: "The great lesson from the true mystics is that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is found in one's daily life, in one's neighbours, friends, and family." ***Abraham Maslow***

Bishop Bernard Paul

Walking together as one parish family

SHAH ALAM: The Parish Pastoral Assembly (PPA) 2026 of the Church of Divine Mercy was held on October 11 with a turnout of 153 participants. The gathering brought together parish priest, Fr George Harrison, parish groups, heads of ministries, BECs, core team members and parishioners in a spirit of faith, unity and communion.

The assembly began with Fr George leading the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a Scripture reading, a moment of silent reflection and the singing of a hymn. This meaningful start set the tone for a day of prayer, listening, discernment and reflection. PPC chairperson, Judy George, then welcomed everyone with her opening remarks.

Facilitator, Sr Margarete Sta Maria FdCC, coordinator of the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation team, introduced the Church's understanding of Synodality and highlighted its importance in our relationships, decision-making and shared mission as a parish community.

Judy then presented a review of the various activities, programmes, celebrations and initiatives carried out since our last PPA in August 2025. This reflection invited us to consider whether our parish decisions had strengthened our identity, sense of communion, participation and mission, and whether they had made our parish more inclusive by empowering more people to take responsibility and actively contribute to parish life.

The heart of the assembly was the three rounds of Conversations in the Spirit, facilitated by Sr Margarete. Through prayerful listening, discernment, and reflection, participants in 19 groups were given the opportunity to share their thoughts, listen to one another, and identify key areas where our parish needs to take action and make a commitment. Each group recorded and presented its key findings, allowing the voices of our parish community to be heard and valued.

Participants were also given the opportunity to complete the Synodal Evaluation from the *Becoming Synodal* booklet, providing further reflection on our journey towards becoming a more synodal Church.

In his closing remarks, Fr George reminded everyone that every parishioner has a role to play in the mission of our parish. Among the many areas of parish development, he highlighted the establishment of the new Seniors ministry, initiatives for single adults, and the ongoing building of the Youth ministry. These initiatives reflect our commitment to reaching out to different groups within our parish and creating opportunities for greater participation and belonging. He then invited everyone to enjoy tea and fellowship.

The PPA 2026 concluded with hearts filled with gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose. It was a meaningful reminder that Synodality is the way of being Church — walking together, listening to one another and reaching out with love and compassion.



Participants in groups during the Conversation in the Spirit.



Sr Margarete Sta Maria FdCC explaining the process of the Conversation in the Spirit.

SFX Melaka reflects on priorities for growth

MELAKA: Listening, shared responsibility and closer collaboration among ministries were central to the Parish Pastoral Assembly of the Church of St Francis Xavier on October 9.

The gathering brought together parishioners from the Tamil, Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia and English apostolates to reflect on the parish's present needs and future development.

Parish priest, Fr Moses Rayappan, led the opening prayer and welcomed participants, thanking them for making time to contribute to this important gathering. Assistant parish priest Fr Devadasan Mathala Muthu was also present.



Parish priest, Fr Moses Rayappan, thanking participants for their presence.

Moderating the assembly, Sr Shanti Mariadass, FdCC, explained that a synodal parish embraces its cultural diversity through mutual listening and openness to the Holy Spirit. This approach, she said, helps the faithful discern God's will for the Church and how they can carry its mission forward together.

Participants were invited to consider a central question: Which three areas most need attention in our parish today and for the future?

The discussion unfolded in a relaxed atmosphere, with good humour accompanying a shared desire to strengthen parish life. Participants reflected on how ministries could grow by recognising parishioners' gifts and talents and encouraging greater commitment to the Church's mission.

They also highlighted the need for clear, effective communication and closer cooperation among ministries, enabling them to work together with a shared sense of purpose.

Following the discussion, Parish Finance Committee member Julius Foo presented the parish accounts.

Parish Pastoral Council chairman, Steven Sagayanathan, then spoke on how the community could "Walk Together as a Parish", highlighting encouraging aspects of parish life alongside areas requiring further growth and improvement.

The evening concluded with a meal and fellowship, giving parishioners from the different language groups an opportunity to strengthen their connections.

Listening together, shaping parish life

KUALA LUMPUR: Listening, sharing and discerning together shaped the Parish Pastoral Assembly of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on October 10.

Facilitated by Sr Margarete Sta Maria FdCC, director of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (API), the assembly brought together 64 participants, including BEC, ministry and sub-ministry leaders, as well as parishioners.

The morning began with silent adoration led by Deacon Albert Arputhan. Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) chairperson, Sharon Priya, then reviewed the findings of the 2025 assembly and progress made throughout 2026, highlighting achievements and areas requiring further attention.

Central to the gathering was Conversations in the Spirit, guided by Sr Margarete. Divided into 11 groups, participants shared the experiences, challenges, and concerns arising from their leadership roles, ministries and parish communities.

Through attentive listening and collective discernment, the groups explored the parish's needs and reflected on their shared responsibilities in its mission.

Participants also completed a survey using the *Becoming Synodal* booklet, offering feedback to inform pastoral planning for the coming year. The exercise invited reflection on how the parish could become a more attentive, inclusive, and missionary community.

In his closing address, parish priest, Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam, thanked participants for their openness and contributions. He also expressed appreciation to Sr Margarete for her guidance and to the PPC for organising the assembly.



A group member presenting the key findings of her groups.

The gathering reaffirmed the parish's commitment to strengthening communion, encouraging participation and discerning its mission together.

Caring for those who care for others

KUALA LUMPUR: Caregivers need rest, understanding and emotional support, and seeking help should never be seen as a sign of weakness. This was the central message of a programme organised jointly by the Archdiocesan Mental Health Ministry (AMHM) and the Malaysia Mind Body Medicine Practitioners Association (MBMPA).

Held in conjunction with World Mental Health Day under the theme *Care for the Caregivers,* the programme was hosted and supported by MAHSA Avenue International College at its campus.

The initiative focused on the emotional, psychological and physical needs of caregivers, whose well-being can be overlooked as attention centres on those receiving care. It complemented the 2026 global theme, *Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change,* which emphasised listening to people with lived experience of mental health conditions.

In his opening address, Fr Philip Chua, AMHM's ecclesiastical assistant and a licensed and registered counsellor, stressed the importance of protecting caregivers' mental health, practising self-care and preventing burnout.

The opening ceremony also featured a recorded message from Archbishop Julian Leow, a sharing by Dato' Sri Dr Steve Yap and a welcome address by the college's principal, Tun An Gie.



Participants doing light exercises during the session.

In the plenary session, Dr Leila Nair explored how caregivers can recognise their emotional needs and extend to themselves the compassion they offer others. Drawing on the *Five Love Languages,* she shared practical approaches to managing stress and maintaining emotional balance.

Her message was clear: self-care is essential to sustaining the ability to care for others.

Personal testimonies brought these concerns into sharper focus. Francis Yip shared his experience of caring for his late mother and subsequently his 91-year-old father, whom he brought from Penang to Kuala Lumpur to care for personally.

Reflecting on filial piety, he described the sacrifices and challenges of caregiving, alongside the love, resilience and sense of purpose it can bring.

Goh Jay Vin of MBMPA introduced breathing, relaxation and sensory techniques for managing stress. Drawing on his own caregiving experience, he reminded participants that feeling tired, frustrated or stressed does not make someone a bad caregiver.

Dr Thayalani Gomez offered another perspective in her session, *A Caregiver's 360 Journey Through Disorders and Disabilities.* Sharing her experience of raising her son, who has autism, she spoke about the challenges faced by families caring for people with additional needs and the perseverance and adaptability this requires.

Her account underscored the importance of ensuring that caregivers receive encouragement and practical assistance throughout their journey.

AMHM staff and volunteer counsellors also conducted mental health screenings. Participants whose results indicated elevated anxiety or depressive symptoms were referred for further professional assessment and counselling where appropriate.

Interactive activities included posture screening, expressive art, laughter fitness, OH Cards activities and hypnotherapy, giving participants opportunities to explore approaches to self-awareness and well-being.

In her closing remarks, MBMPA president Dr Madelene Ong thanked the speakers, participants, organisers, volunteers and supporting partners. She encouraged continued efforts to build a culture of compassion, understanding and mutual support.

Through professional insights, personal testimonies and opportunities for connection, the programme reinforced that caring for caregivers is a shared responsibility. Sustaining their well-being requires both attention to their own needs and dependable support from those around them.

Bowling builds friendship across faiths

IPOH: Friendship and unity brought members of PAS Perak and the Catholic community of the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMPH) together for a friendly bowling event at Lite Superbowl, Angsana Mall, on October 11.

Themed *Persahabatan Boling Perpaduan (Friendship, Bowling, Unity),* the gathering offered participants an opportunity to strengthen relationships and deepen mutual understanding through sport.

Among those present were Cardinal Sebastian Francis; Senator Ustaz Nik Mohamad Abduh Nik Abdul Aziz, chairman of Lajnah Dakwah PAS Pusat; and Ustaz Mohd Akmal Haji Kamaruddin of Lajnah Dakwah PAS Perak.

The organisers included Dato' Domnic Selvam Gnanapragasam, representing OMPH, and Tuan Haji Abdul Rahman, representing Lajnah Dakwah PAS Pusat.



A total of 112 men and women from both communities took part across 28 bowling lanes. Friendly competition was accompanied by conversation and fellowship, allowing participants to get to know one another in a relaxed atmosphere.

In his opening remarks, Ustaz Mohd Akmal expressed hope that similar programmes would continue to strengthen friendships and promote understanding among Malaysians of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Despite their different traditions, he said, participants shared a commitment to friendship, solidarity and peace.

Dato' Domnic thanked both communities for their cooperation in organising the event. Their partnership, he said, demonstrated that Malaysians could live, work and celebrate together harmoniously as "One Malaysia".

Thanking everyone for their support and participation, Cardinal Sebastian said that at such a gathering, "we are all winners in fraternal friendship".

He described the event as another milestone in the Diocese of Penang's efforts to build understanding through interreligious engagement across Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Kelantan and Perak.

The gathering continued a growing relationship of dialogue and cooperation between the Muslim and Catholic communities. Through a shared sporting activity, participants created opportunities for friendship and mutual trust to grow. **Christopher Kushi**



Ustaz Ikmal bin Kamaruddin presenting a gift to Cardinal Sebastian Francis.



Following Mary's example of faith and trust

HULU SELANGOR: Mary's example of listening, trust, and faithful service was the focus of the annual patronal feast of the Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima in Gedangsa on October 10.

Parishioners and pilgrims gathered for the Rosary and Angelus before Mass, celebrated by Fr Vincent Paul, parish priest of the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Tanjung Malim, and assisted by Deacon Issac Alfred Simbun.

Welcoming the congregation, Fr Vincent noted that October 13 marked the 109th anniversary of the final apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, associated with the Miracle of the Sun.

"God sent His mother to us to remind us that He is with us," he said.

In his homily, Fr Vincent encouraged the faithful to deepen their understanding of Marian spirituality by reflecting on Mary's relationship with Jesus, her trust in God and her willingness to serve.

Recalling the Annunciation, he said Mary listened and questioned as she sought to understand God's plan. Her eventual acceptance offered a model for Christians discerning God's Will in their own lives.

The faithful, he said, must make time to listen to what God asks of them and respond with Mary's readiness to serve.

Reflecting on Mary and Joseph's search for Jesus, whom they found in the Temple after three days, Fr Vincent urged the congregation to examine whether they had allowed other priorities to distance them from God. Wealth and possessions, he reminded them, could not replace a relationship with Him.

At the wedding at Cana, Mary directed the servants to follow Jesus' instructions. Her example, he explained, draws believers towards God through listening to His Word and putting it into practice.

Catholics do not worship Mary, he added, but learn from her faith and seek her maternal intercession.

Mary's presence at the foot of the Cross also offered encouragement in suffering. Fr Vincent urged the faithful to draw strength from prayer and entrust their lives to God, including in times of loss and at the hour of death.

Returning to Fatima's call to prayer, he challenged the congregation to consider whether their participation in Mass and the Rosary was accompanied by sincere, attentive prayer. He invited them to pray for peace, offer their personal intentions and remain open to God's guidance.

Mass was followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, with time for silent adoration.

Chapel chairperson and Gedangsa BEC leader Clement welcomed visitors from Kuala Lumpur and Tanjung Malim, including some 60 UPSI Catholic students and trainee teachers. He thanked Fr Vincent and Deacon Issac for celebrating with the community and acknowledged those who attended despite the haze.

The gathering also marked Fr Vincent's 28th anniversary of priestly ordination, which fell that day. A cake was presented as the congregation sang greetings for the feast and anniversary.

Parishioners and visitors then shared a meal, strengthening bonds within the community. BEC Gedangsa thanked all who attended despite the haze, affirming the feast's importance in the spiritual life of this rural Catholic community in Hulu Selangor. **Bernard Anthony**

Proclaiming the Word with sound, sense and spirit

Anita Matthews

IPOH: Lectors are called to proclaim Scripture, helping the congregation encounter Christ through the Word of God, said Lucille Dass during a formation session at the Church of St Michael on October 17.

Titled *The Lector's Sacred Ministry: Sound… Sense… Spirit,* the session explored the spiritual and practical preparation essential to this responsibility.

"Our ministry is to enable the WORD to make its way into the heads, hearts and hands of everyone present at the Lord's banquet," Lucille said, noting that not all lectors understood the difference between reading and proclamation.

Rooted in the Catholic understanding of the Word of God, lectorship requires technical competence supported by a strong spiritual foundation. Lucille explained this through three interconnected elements: sound, sense and spirit.



Lucille Dass explaining the importance of spiritual and practical preparations for lectors.

Sound encompasses projection, articulation, enunciation, breathing and tonal variation. Sense requires an understanding of the text's historical and literary context and its place within the story of salvation. Spirit enables the lector to communicate its divine message with conviction, reverence and faith.

Drawing on Romans, Colossians, Genesis, Isaiah, Hebrews, Psalms, Proverbs and the Gospels, Lucille stressed the need to internalise Scripture, reflect on it and embody it in daily life.

"Romans 5:5 reminds us that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit," she said.

Lectors must also recognise the text's genre, identify its central message and practise pronunciation and phrasing to convey its meaning clearly. Participants took turns proclaiming at the ambo and received guidance on breathing and sentence delivery.

Lucille reiterated that the Catholic Bible is the lector's essential source of formation.

"As St Jerome reminds us: Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ," she said.

She encouraged lectors to prayerfully study all the readings for the liturgy, including the passages surrounding their assigned text. This helps them appreciate how Jesus fulfils the Old Testament and how Scripture speaks to the Church today.

She outlined five habits — pray, prepare, practise, pray again and proclaim — to ensure that the Word first takes root in the lector's heart before being shared with others.

Drawing on Isaiah 50:4, Lucille described proclamation as an act of service that offers comfort, hope and encouragement to the weary. Jeremiah 1:4–10 reminds lectors to trust in God's grace despite their limitations, while Colossians 3:23 calls them to serve wholeheartedly, seeking to please God rather than win human approval.

Ultimately, lectors are servants and witnesses of Christ, entrusted with helping the assembly hear, understand and live the Gospel.

"When sound conveys sense and sense is animated by the Spirit, proclamation becomes evangelisation," Lucille said. The Word can then take root, transform hearts and bear fruit in people's lives.

Parish priest, Fr Aloysius Tan, said: "The session reaffirmed that lectors are not merely readers, but ministers entrusted with proclaiming the living Word of God. Their spiritual preparation and understanding of Scripture are essential in helping the faithful encounter Christ through His Word."

Listening to Christ in the age of AI



Children show who shape their voices and how they can remain attentive to Christ in the midst of so many other influences.

KUALA LUMPUR: Primary-level catechism students from four parishes in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur's Central District explored the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) through a two-week learning programme.

Children from the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist and the parishes of Holy Rosary, St Anthony and Our Lady of Fatima were introduced to the growing influence of AI and encouraged to reflect on how faith can guide their lives in a rapidly changing digital world.

The initiative drew inspiration from Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas,* which addresses safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence and calls for technology to serve human dignity and the common good.

Guided by their catechists, the children considered whose voice shapes their choices and how they can remain attentive to Christ amid the many influences competing for their attention. They also reflected on their role in building a civilisation of love rooted in listening, care and concern for others.

The programme culminated on October 10, when the four parish communities gathered for a day of prayer, learning and sharing. The children showcased their work and deepened their understanding of AI's benefits and potential dangers.

The gathering encouraged them to approach the digital world with discernment, allowing the voice of Christ to guide their choices and relationships. **Dempsey Fernandez**

Alpha ends with a call to bear fruit

KLANG: "The good works that have started here should not stop here. Let them continue to bear fruit in the life of the parish and beyond."

With these words, Fr Gregory Chan, parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL), closed the parish's Alpha Course recently, encouraging more than 80 participants to deepen their faith beyond the programme.

Beginning on June 28, the ten-week course brought together participants from the English and Tamil-speaking communities to explore God's love, the redeeming power of Jesus and the person of the Holy Spirit.

Sessions included a shared meal, praise and worship, a talk and small-group sharing. Although talks and discussions were conducted separately in English and Tamil, meals and worship brought both communities together, building friendships across language barriers.

As trust grew, participants shared more openly about their struggles and how prayer, Scripture and God's guidance helped them. One group began a daily Scripture-reading challenge through WhatsApp, which has continued since the course ended.

A highlight was the *Alpha Weekend Away* at Villa Dominic, Genting, on Aug 22–23, focusing on the Holy Spirit. Through prayer, personal surrender and affirmation, participants encountered or rediscovered God's presence. They also had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Fr Michael Idoko, who accompanied them, described the weekend as "truly grace-filled".

"Through prayer, fellowship and sincere sharing, I witnessed hearts opening to God's mercy and the Holy Spirit quietly renewing lives. It deserves a repeat!" he said.

For Sherine Wong, a convert, Alpha brought a greater awareness of God in daily life.

"I am learning to pray more, to surrender my worries and to trust God. I have a renewed desire to grow closer to God and to listen to the Holy Spirit," she said.

Gregory Carver, from the Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Banting, said the course helped him understand the Holy Spirit, who had long remained a mystery despite his connection with the Father and the Son through prayer.



Participants praying for one another.

Others spoke of renewed relationships, healing from past hurts and a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist.

"Through the Alpha Course, I've come to experience the Holy Spirit in a new way. Attending the Eucharistic celebration now is more enriching and I am able to focus much better," said C. Devadass.

Jacinta, who invited her sister-in-law Cecily, shared how the experience helped them address past hurts and find a sense of family within the Alpha community.

Assistant parish priest, Fr Gnana Selvam Berintis, recalled witnessing Alpha's impact as a layperson and, later, as a priest, particularly through participants' candid sharing. He described the programme as a bridge to a deeper relationship with God and a stronger sense of belonging to God's family.

At the final gathering, presenter Damian Prakash urged participants to measure Alpha's success by what followed.

"Don't be quick to regard the course as a success. We will see if it's successful by looking at the fruit," he said.

He encouraged them to participate more actively in parish life, bring hope to their BECs and share their encounters with Jesus.

Alpha Parish coordinator, Clara Pat Ro, echoed this call, urging participants to make their experience "a way of life". She thanked the English and Tamil facilitators and helpers before participants prayed over the team.

The gathering ended with shared dishes, testimonies, photographs and fellowship — sustaining the bonds formed over ten weeks.

Those interested in organising an Alpha Course in their parish may contact Cassendra Sunita at 012-211 6709. **OLL Alpha Team**

St Philip's medical camp brings care to the wider community

Richard Joseph

SEGAMAT: A medical camp organised by the Church of St Philip drew a strong response from the wider community, bringing people of different racial and cultural backgrounds together through a shared concern for health and well-being.

Held on October 18, the initiative sought to raise awareness of the importance of regular health screening and encourage people to take a more proactive approach to preventive care.

Services included dental care, gynaecology, and ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultations, alongside blood donation. Medical professionals, health care personnel and volunteers contributed their time and expertise, with support and participation from the Ministry of Health (KKM) in Segamat.

Beyond the health care services offered, the camp provided an opportunity for people from different backgrounds to meet and interact. Their participation reflected how a practical community initiative can build connections across racial and cultural boundaries.

The event followed several months of planning and preparation by an organising committee chaired by Louis Vincent. Committee members included Jacob Isaac, Benedict Pang, Joseph George, James and Richard Joseph.

Working behind the scenes, the team coordinated preparations and arrangements for the camp. Their efforts, together with the cooperation of healthcare personnel and volunteers, helped the parish extend its outreach beyond its own congregation.

The organisers expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of Health, medical professionals, healthcare workers and volunteers for their support and contributions.

The public response was an encouraging sign of interest in personal health and preventive care. It also highlighted the role that parishes can play in supporting community well-being by bringing people and professional expertise together.

For the Church of St Philip, the camp was an opportunity to put faith into action through practical service, while strengthening relationships with the wider Segamat community.



A child getting her eyes tested.

Community rallies for Orang Asli children's education

IPOH: Helping Orang Asli children remain in school and pursue their aspirations was at the heart of a fundraising dinner for Shalom Marian Hostel (Asrama Shalom Marian), attended by some 700 people.

Held at Bro John Moh Hall, SMJK Sam Tet, on October 10, the dinner supported the hostel's work with children from the Temiar community in Gua Musang, Kelantan, who attend school in Ipoh.

Guests included Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, *pic*; Ipoh Timor MP Howard Lee Chuan How; Anglican clergy Rev John Kennedy and Rev Dr Peter Yee; Penang diocesan vicar-general Msgr Stephen Liew; priests, religious, benefactors and supporters.





A presentation by the Orang Asli children.

Led by Joseph Boon Chai, founder and chairman of the Light of Shalom Society Malacca, the initiative serves children aged seven to 17. It provides accommodation and educational support to help them complete Form Five and sit for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination.

In 2025, following discussions between Joseph and Cardinal Sebastian, the Diocese of Penang made the former Mariaville Good Shepherd Kindergarten premises in Jalan Francois, Tambun, available for conversion into a hostel.

It now houses around 50 students attending St Michael's Institution, SK La Salle, SK Marian Convent and SK ACS in Ipoh.

Operating costs total approximately RM48,000 a month, or RM576,000 annually. Students receive free accommodation, nutritious meals, school transport and tuition, alongside travel arrangements for regular visits home to Gua Musang.

The hostel also offers life skills development and faith formation, helping students build confidence in a supportive environment. This assistance aims to reduce the risk of children leaving school because of the difficulties of accessing education from remote villages.

In his address, Howard Lee affirmed that education is a fundamental right upheld across faiths and philosophies. He stressed that Orang Asli children must have access to quality education as a foundation for their future.

Cardinal Sebastian thanked the organisers and benefactors, saying every contribution, regardless of size, was an investment in the children's hopes and potential.

He reflected that rooms once filled with kindergarten pupils from Ipoh now housed the aspirations of Orang Asli students seeking an education through the city's mission schools.

The cardinal visited the children's communities in 2025 and again in August 2026, travelling five hours by four-wheel drive with Joseph and his team. The visits enabled them to listen to families, build trust and understand their hopes for their children.

He highlighted the communities' strong communal values and their desire for younger generations to have opportunities beyond those available to their parents. Education, he emphasised, is a right every child deserves.

Thanking Fr Aloysius Tan, parishioners of the Church of St Michael and supporters in Ipoh and beyond, Cardinal Sebastian acknowledged the donations, prayers, volunteer service and encouragement that sustain the hostel.

Turning to the children, he said: "Know that you are not alone. Here, you are safe, supported, and welcomed into a place you can call home. You are seen, you are loved, and you are both the promise of today and the hope of tomorrow."

He also thanked staff and caregivers for their dedication, urging all involved to continue bringing peace, love and hope to the children entrusted to their care. **Christopher Kushi**

A *Fam-tastic* afternoon at Assumption parish

PETALING JAYA: Closing time came and went, but the fun continued as families lingered over games, food, and fellowship at the Church of the Assumption's *Fam-tastic* Family Day on October 4.

Scheduled to run from 1.00pm to 3.00pm, the celebration stretched well into the afternoon, with food stalls serving until 4.45pm and games continuing until almost 5.00pm. Clearly, nobody was in a hurry to call it a day.

Children and adults tested their skills at ring toss, bean bag toss, mini golf, and the intriguingly named "Mind the Gap". The doughnut-eating game added to the amusement, while stage games drew cheers and laughter from participants and spectators alike.

Friendly competition kept the game stations busy, but there were plenty of reasons to take a break — many of them edible.

Satay and smashed burgers proved popular, alongside Sarawak *laksa,* colourful *Nyonya kuih* and sweet *payasam.* The spread offered something for different tastes, while shared tables gave families and friends a chance to catch up. Even the food queues provided opportunities for conversation.



Laughter and friendly competition as parishioners take the stage in one of the games.

For younger visitors, the petting zoo offered the excitement of getting close to animals, adding another attraction to an already busy afternoon.

Anticipation also surrounded the main lucky draw, with a spectacular 3kg cake among the prizes. For those hoping to take it home, there was good reason to stay until the results were announced.

Yet the afternoon's appeal went beyond the games, food and prizes. It gave parishioners of different ages time to enjoy one another's company, renew friendships and make new connections.

The children's cheers, conversations around the tables, and families staying well beyond the scheduled finish reflected the gathering's warmth.

Fam-tastic Family Day lived up to its name — and comfortably outlasted its timetable. **Priya Stalin**

Listening with care, visiting with compassion

KUALA LUMPUR: Attentive listening, respect for personal boundaries and prayer rooted in people's needs were central to a Legion of Mary retreat that combined spiritual reflection with practical visitation training.

Ninety legionaries attended the annual retreat at the Church of the Sacred Heart, on October 17. Organised by the Queen of Apostles Curia with the parish's support, the gathering carried the theme *Walking with Mary — Accompanying Others with Presence, Compassion and a Healing Heart.*

Leading the retreat was Fr Philip Chua, ecclesiastical assistant to the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Mental Health Ministry. A registered and licensed counsellor, he is also a certified counselling supervisor with the Malaysian Board of Counsellors.

Drawing on faith and counselling practice, Fr Philip guided participants in communicating Christ's care through thoughtful responses, sensitive prayer and a willingness to understand before offering help.

Mary's visit to Elizabeth provided a model for their mission. Carrying Christ within her, Mary reached out through her presence and service. Legionaries were encouraged to follow her example with humility and sensitivity when visiting homes, accompanying older people, caring for the sick or supporting those facing difficulties.

The training focused on five skills: listening, paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, summarising and incorporating prayer.



Participants practising their listening skills.

Listening involves attending to a person's words, tone, expressions and silences without interrupting or preparing an answer. Open-ended questions can encourage sharing, while a willingness to remain quietly present can offer reassurance when words are difficult.

Paraphrasing helps visitors check their understanding by briefly restating what someone has shared. It allows the person to clarify or correct the visitor's interpretation and guards against assumptions that could misrepresent their experience.

Reflecting feelings means recognising emotions such as loneliness, fear or sadness and responding gently. Participants were reminded that dismissive remarks such as "Don't think too much" or "Others have it worse than you" can leave people feeling misunderstood. Distress does not always require immediate advice; it may first need patient acceptance.

Summarising brings together the experiences, feelings and needs expressed, helping both parties consider appropriate next steps. These might include follow-up visits, parish assistance or professional support. Visitors should respect the person's wishes and avoid promising help beyond their capacity.

Prayer, offered with the person's agreement, should respond to the concerns shared. It should be sincere and avoid blame, preaching or promises of a particular outcome. If someone does not wish to pray, that choice should be respected and care should continue.

Participants were encouraged to use these skills flexibly, returning to listening whenever further concerns or emotions emerged.

Small-group role-play, observation and discussion allowed legionaries to practise the skills from both the visitor's and recipient's perspectives. Feedback helped them recognise responses that offered comfort and those that might create pressure.

The retreat also addressed the limits of visitation ministry. Accompanying someone with a "healing heart" does not mean resolving every problem. When needs exceed their competence, legionaries should help the person connect with a priest, parish services or suitable professionals.

Personal and family information should remain confidential, while immediate safety concerns require prompt assistance. Participants were also encouraged to care for their own physical, emotional and spiritual well-being through prayer, rest, team support and seeking help when needed.

The day concluded with the Eucharist. Thanking participants, Fr Philip urged them to share their learning with their respective groups and apply it in their regular apostolic work.

He also encouraged other Legion of Mary curiae to organise ongoing visitation training, strengthening their ability to bring Christ's care to people through presence, compassion and practical support.

Curiae interested in arranging a workshop with Fr Philip may email *philip@archkl.org.*





From baptism at 21 to ordained ministry



MELAKA: Sixteen years after embracing the Catholic faith as a young adult, Gabriel Puvaneswaran Pillai, *pic*, took another significant step in his journey when he was ordained a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Malacca Johore on October 20.

About 300 parishioners joined the clergy for the ordination Mass celebrated by Bishop Bernard Paul at the Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak. Beginning at 8.30pm, the open-air celebration unfolded on the church grounds, against the backdrop of the village's historic Catholic setting.

Born and raised in Seri Kembangan, Deacon Gabriel is the eldest of three sons of James Balan and Janey Victoria. He was baptised at the age of 21 in 2010 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru, by the late Msgr Michael Mannayagam.

His ordination was accompanied by a call to place God at the centre of his ministry and to serve with humility and a listening heart.

In his homily, Bishop Bernard drew on the Acts of the Apostles, recalling how the early Christian community discerned together in selecting seven men to assist in the ministry of service and charity. He highlighted this communal approach as an example of synodality in the life of the early Church.

The bishop urged the faithful to embrace synodality as a way of life, cultivating a willingness to listen with the heart and ensuring that others are included.

Turning to John the Baptist's words, "He must increase; I must decrease" (John 3:30), Bishop Bernard encouraged Deacon Gabriel to make that attitude his own, allowing God to become increasingly visible through his life and service.

In his thanksgiving address, the newly ordained deacon spoke in four languages, drawing applause from the congregation when he addressed them in Mandarin.

He thanked Bishop Bernard for accepting him and expressed gratitude to all who had accompanied his journey through prayer, encouragement and moral support.

He gave special thanks to Fr Gerard Theraviam, Fr Edwin Peter and Fr Paulino Miranda for their guidance and assistance during his studies at College General and his pastoral attachment in Kuala Lumpur.

Deacon Gabriel has been assigned to the Church of St Louis, Kluang to assist the parish priest in diaconal ministry with effect from Nov 1. **Deacon Leslie Petrus**

Help students feel seen and loved

VATICAN: Catholic schools and universities should help young people feel known, welcomed and loved amid growing pressures to perform and fears of failure, Pope Leo XIV said.

Addressing participants in the International Congress for Pastoral Care in Schools and Universities on October 22, the Pope urged educators to recognise young people's hopes and vulnerabilities and nurture their confidence through relationships of trust.

"Courage is born from a pact of trust: from the experience of someone who believes in you before you believe in yourself," he said.

Recalling Jesus' choice of the Apostles, he explained that they were not chosen because they were brave. Rather, his call and trust made them capable of fulfilling their mission.

The Pope warned that a culture which constantly compares and ranks people, sometimes ruthlessly, can discourage young people before they even try. Many fear making mistakes, being misunderstood or failing to meet expectations.



St Joseph's Institution (Junior) students in a class.(photo: Catholic News Singapore)

Beneath the protective barriers teenagers build to avoid suffering, he said, lies a desire to love and be loved.

Catholic educational institutions should therefore be, first and foremost, a home where students know they are expected and welcomed.

That belonging takes shape through personal attention: someone who looks a student in the eye, remembers their name, notices their absence and rejoices when they return.

"Many walk through the corridors of our schools and universities and perhaps feel anonymous," he said.

While many students demonstrate enthusiasm, generosity and a spirit of service, others struggle with wounded family relationships, digital loneliness, feelings of inadequacy and anxiety about an uncertain future.

The congress, organised by the Dicastery for Culture and Education, was held at the Vatican from October 22 to 23.

Pope Leo called on educators to nurture students' intellectual curiosity, help them encounter Christ and discover how faith and reason enrich one another. Pastoral ministry, he said, should give young people the time and support to develop their thinking, discern carefully and persevere in seeking truth.

He also stressed the importance of educating the heart in compassion, gratitude, sensitivity to others' suffering and a desire for God.

"Service to the poor, volunteering, and care for creation are not merely supplementary activities, but places where the heart learns to expand," he said.

Charity, he added, goes hand in hand with prayer.

The Pope encouraged educators and pastoral workers to continue walking alongside young people as they discover the gifts God has placed within them and learn to use those gifts for others.

"Help the young people you meet to become protagonists of a new way of inhabiting the world, builders of fraternity and of a more just society," he urged. **Vatican News**

Cardinal warns against 'spiritual celebrities'

LILOAN, Philippines: Catholic charismatic communities must guard against the rise of "spiritual celebrities" and ensure that spiritual gifts lead to humble service, shared responsibility and mature discipleship, Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan said.

Addressing the second National Spiritual Direction Conference of CHARIS Philippines in Liloan, Cebu, the cardinal warned against allowing gifts such as preaching, healing and discernment to become sources of personal prestige or influence.

"The Holy Spirit does not distribute gifts to create spiritual celebrities. The Spirit distributes gifts to build up the Body of Christ," he said.

Charisms, he explained, are entrusted to believers for the good of others. Their exercise should strengthen the Christian community, rather than elevate individuals above fellow members or encourage rivalry over spiritual standing.

"A charism is a gift of the Spirit not for the individual alone, but for the community," he said.

Cardinal David also cautioned charismatic leaders against fostering dependence on their personalities or abilities. Their responsibility is to help others recognise and develop their own gifts, equipping them to share in the Church's mission.

"The purpose of leadership is not to make people dependent on leaders. It is rather to help them become mature disciples, capable of exercising their own gifts and responsibilities," he said.

Authentic spiritual renewal, he added, must find expression in concrete service: greater concern for marginalised people, a commitment to justice and active participation in the Church's mission.

The cardinal linked this understanding of spiritual growth with synodality, emphasising listening, shared responsibility and collective discernment. He urged communities to recognise the gifts of each member and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance together.

Held from October 19 to 21, the conference brought together about 165 delegates, including bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders from dioceses and charismatic groups across the Philippines. It aimed to deepen formation in spiritual direction and strengthen participants' involvement in the Church's life and mission.



CHARIS, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service, was established by the Vatican in 2018 at Pope Francis' request to serve the Catholic Charismatic Renewal worldwide. Its mission includes promoting unity among charismatic groups, sharing the experience of the Holy Spirit and serving the poor. **CBCPNews**

Egypt's tiny Catholic minority punches above its weight

CAIRO: Despite being vastly outnumbered in a country of 120 million people, Egypt's Catholic Church plays a significant role in education, health care and community development, while helping to foster interfaith relations.

Bishop Emmanuel Bishay of Luxor told Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) that the Church serves society despite its small numbers, while facing challenges arising from poverty, migration and a widely dispersed Catholic population.

"The Catholic Church is small in numbers but strong in services. Some of the best schools in Egypt are Catholic schools, and the fact that state officials regularly turn to Catholic schools is evidence of this," he said.

In Luxor Diocese, which has about 25,000 Catholics, the Church operates 14 clinics, most staffed by religious Sisters. It also runs cultural centres and libraries serving local communities.

Bishop Bishay said Catholic institutions had pioneered social services that other religious communities had subsequently adopted.

"The Catholic Church has not only provided these services – it has also shown Egyptian society how to provide them," he said, citing similar initiatives by the Coptic Orthodox Church and, more recently, mosques.

The Church's work is particularly important in Upper Egypt, where poverty is widespread and public services often fall short of those available in the Nile Delta and northern regions.

Healthcare, education and childcare remain areas of concern, requiring considerable effort from the Church. Bishop Bishay also lamented the limited opportunities available to talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"It saddens me to see talented people whose abilities are not given their due, or whose surroundings do not give them the opportunity to develop and fulfil their potential," he said.

Egypt's population is predominantly Muslim, with an estimated 10 to 15 million Orthodox Copts. The Catholic Coptic Church has approximately 300,000 members nationwide.

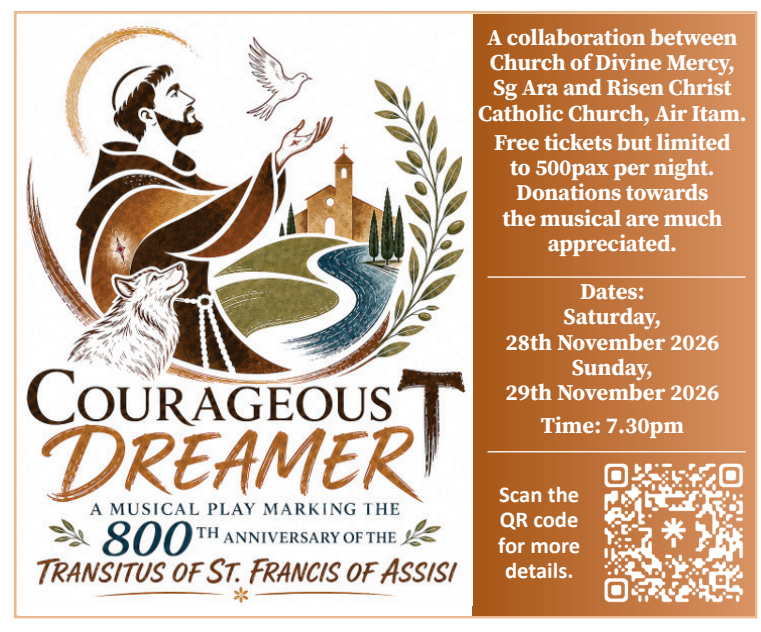
Despite its small size, the Catholic Church contributes to building relationships across religious communities, although difficulties persist, particularly in villages and smaller settlements.

"We make every effort to build relationships with the Orthodox community and with Muslims, who are the majority," Bishop Bishay said.

He described relations between the Catholic and Coptic Orthodox Churches at the official level as positive, marked by mutual affection and the exchange of greetings during religious celebrations.

While acknowledging difficult periods in relations with the Muslim community, he said the situation had improved in recent years, with moderate voices gaining greater prominence and government support.

"The change is slow but noticeable," he said, expressing hope that Egypt would continue moving towards greater understanding and improved interfaith relations. **ICN**





Bringing Asia's voice to the theological table

Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, director of the Catholic Research Centre, was appointed by Pope Leo XIV to the International Theological Commission on October 19 for a five-year term (2026–2031). In this interview with *HERALD*, he reflects on his first appointment to the Commission, the Asian perspectives he hopes to bring and the importance of keeping theology connected to everyday life.



Is this your first appointment to this Commission? If yes, what are your feelings on being selected?
Yes, this is my first appointment to the International Theological Commission. Before this, I served as a Consultor to the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue for two terms, from 2015 to 2025.

While there is a genuine sense of personal joy in being able to contribute to the life of the universal Church and to the mission entrusted to the Holy Father, I also see this appointment as a great privilege and responsibility. It allows me to bring the voices, experiences, and theological perspectives of the Church in Asia to the wider universal Church. I hope, in some small way, to help ensure that the richness and diversity of the Churches in Asia can contribute to the ongoing reflection and discernment of the universal Church.

For readers unfamiliar with the International Theological Commission, how would you explain its work and what your responsibilities will involve?
Primarily, the Commission assists the Holy See, particularly the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, in examining doctrinal questions of major importance and contemporary relevance. It brings together theologians from different schools of thought, countries, and ecclesial contexts, fostering a rich and diverse theological dialogue.

The Commission is comprised of members who reflect a wide range of ecclesial backgrounds, representing different states of life, cultures, theological traditions, and religious charisms.

What experiences from serving the Church in Malaysia, particularly in our multireligious and multicultural society, do you hope to bring to the Commission's discussions?
I hope to bring the experience of serving not only the Church in Malaysia, but also in Asia through the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, where faith is lived within a rich multireligious and multicultural society. This has taught me the importance of dialogue, listening, respect for different traditions, and finding ways for the Church to witness to the Gospel while engaging positively with others. I hope these experiences can contribute an Asian perspective to the Commission's theological reflection.

How has your previous theological and pastoral work prepared you for this responsibility?
I was a member of the FABC Office for Theological Concerns from 2005 to 2020, which gave me a broad understanding of the pastoral and theological life of the Churches in Asia. I carry with me the many conversations, experiences, and insights gathered through those years into this new role.

At the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, my experience has also been shaped by teaching and pastoral ministry in parishes. I believe this combination of theological reflection and direct pastoral experience gives me a helpful balance, allowing me to bring both academic perspectives and the lived realities of the Church to the Commission's discussions.

Theology can seem far removed from everyday life. How can the Commission's work help ordinary Catholics in their families, parishes and daily decisions?
Having been involved in pastoral ministry, theological teaching, the FABC Office for Theological Concerns, and now the FABC Commission for Synodality, I hope to bring to the International Theological Commission the voices and experiences emerging from this synodal journey. In particular, I hope to contribute the importance of listening to one another, engaging diverse perspectives, and discerning together.

I believe theological reflection is enriched when it remains closely connected to the lived experience of the Church. In this sense, synodality can help theology become more attentive to the questions, hopes and realities of God's people, while creating space for the wisdom and experience of the whole Church to enrich our theological reflection.

As you begin this five-year term, what do you most hope to contribute?
I hope to contribute an Asian perspective to the theological reflection of the universal Church, drawing from the rich pastoral and theological experiences of our churches in Asia. I hope to bring to the ITC the voices, questions and lived experiences of a Church that is diverse, multireligious and multicultural, while remaining faithful to the teachings and Tradition of the Church.

At the same time, I come with a willingness to listen and to learn from the other members of the ITC, who bring their own experiences and perspectives from different regions, cultures and ecclesial contexts. I believe that such an exchange can enrich our theological reflection and help us to see more fully the universality of the Church.

Above all, I see this appointment as an opportunity to serve the universal Church and to assist the Holy Father in his ministry of guiding the Church. I hope to contribute with a spirit of listening, dialogue and collaboration, helping to build a theology that is faithful to the Church's Tradition while responding meaningfully to the realities of our world today.

● ***Fr Clarence is parish priest of the Church of St Anthony, Kuala Lumpur, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and ecclesiastical assistant to its Social Communications Ministry. He also serves as associate secretary of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and executive secretary of its Commission for Synodality. He participated as a voting member in the Synod on Synodality's assemblies in Rome in 2023 and 2024.***

Pope tasks theologians with clarifying Church Tradition

VATICAN: The International Theological Commission (ITC) will study the meaning of Church Tradition and how the faith is transmitted across cultures following Pope Leo XIV's appointment of 24 new members on October 19.

The new appointees comprise 16 priests, one religious sister and seven laypeople, who will serve five-year terms. Six existing members will serve a second term.

Among those appointed is Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, director of the Catholic Research Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Sources at the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith told *EWTN News Español* that the commission's work will be organised into two thematic sub-commissions.

The first will examine Church Tradition, central to understanding how the faith has been handed down through the centuries.

It will seek to "clarify what Tradition with a capital T is, where it is found, how it is determined that something belongs to Tradition, and so forth", the sources said.

The study will draw on Scripture, the Church Fathers, history, philosophy and scientific contributions. It will also examine the development of papal teaching on the subject, from St Paul VI to *Magnifica Humanitas.*



Pope Leo XIV holds an audience with members of the International Theological Commission in 2025. (Vatican Media)

Faith and culture
The second sub-commission will explore how the Church's living Tradition is expressed and transmitted through different cultures.

Its work will address inculturation, popular piety and the varied forms of language through which Christians express and communicate their faith.

"It will study that living Tradition that runs through the manifestations of faith of the People of God in their various cultural forms," the dicastery sources said.

The topics emerged from dialogue between Pope Leo and the commission's president, Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Established by St Paul VI in 1969, the ITC assists the Holy See in examining doctrinal questions of particular importance. Its members are internationally recognised theologians appointed by the Pope on the recommendation of the dicastery's prefect.

Understanding Tradition
The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes Tradition as the living transmission of the Gospel through the Holy Spirit, distinct from but closely connected to Sacred Scripture (No. 78).

Through Tradition, the Church passes on her faith in her teaching, life and worship.

Apostolic Tradition transmits what the apostles received from Christ's teaching and example, and what they learned through the Holy Spirit. Entrusted to their successors, this inheritance is to be faithfully preserved, explained and proclaimed (Nos. 81, 83).

It differs from particular theological, disciplinary, liturgical and devotional traditions, which develop in local Churches and may vary across places and historical periods (No. 83). **EWTN News**

Pope's prayer intention for November

For the proper use of wealth

Wealth must serve life



Prayer Prism

Fr Fabian Dicom



In one home, the question at dinner might be whether to eat out or order in. In another, it might be whether there is enough food to last until payday. Both families may work hard, both may want the best for their children, and both may dream of a better future. Yet their experience of life can be very different.

This difference raises a question that goes beyond money: what does it mean to live in a society where some have more than enough while others struggle to meet their basic needs?

There is nothing wrong with being wealthy. People work hard, build businesses, save for the future and provide for their families. The Church does not condemn wealth simply because someone has it. But Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention for November invites us to look more closely at the place wealth occupies in our lives. He asks us to ***pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of the common good and solidarity of those who have less.***

The question, then, is not simply how much we possess, but what we do with it and whether our wealth makes life better for others.

This is where ***the temptation of selfishness*** enters. It is not always obvious. It does not necessarily mean that we are cruel or unwilling to help. Sometimes, we become so concerned about protecting what we have that we pay less attention to what others lack. We tell ourselves that we have worked hard for everything we own, and therefore we are entitled to keep it for ourselves. We may even give generously to charity without ever questioning why some people struggle to obtain the necessities of life while others enjoy so much more than they need.

The problem is not that we have something. It begins when what we have becomes more important than the lives of those who have less.

Jesus recognised this danger when He said, "You cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24). The danger is not wealth itself, but allowing the desire to acquire and protect what we have to take precedence over our responsibility towards others.

The story of Zacchaeus offers a different path (Luke 19:1-10). After encountering Jesus, Zacchaeus declares that he will give half his possessions to the poor and repay those he has defrauded. His encounter with Jesus becomes visible in how he uses his wealth and responds to those he has wronged.

Wealth and the common good

Catholic social teaching offers us a different way of looking at wealth. It teaches that the goods of the earth are meant for everyone, not only those who can afford them.

This does not mean that everyone must own the same things. People have a right to private property and to enjoy the fruits of their work. But ownership also carries responsibility. What we possess should contribute to the well-being of others, not only to our own comfort.

The Church calls this the *universal destination of goods.* It reminds us that the earth and its resources are gifts intended to serve the whole human family. This is closely connected to the ***common good:*** creating the conditions that allow everyone to live with dignity, with access to decent housing, education, healthcare, meaningful work and opportunities to develop their gifts.

A country cannot measure its success only by economic growth or the wealth accumulated by its citizens. We must also ask whether families can afford the necessities of life, whether workers receive fair wages and whether children have a fair chance to build a future, regardless of their parents' income. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium,* an economy that excludes people and treats them as disposable cannot be reconciled with the Gospel. A society can become richer without becoming more just.

Solidarity and a society where everyone belongs

What, then, would a more just society look like? This brings us to the idea of an egalitarian society, where every person has equal worth and the opportunity to live with dignity. No one should be denied the basic conditions of a decent life simply because they were born poor or lack the opportunities and connections others enjoy.

This vision is deeply connected to our belief that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). A person's worth does not depend on wealth, social standing or influence. If we truly believe this, we cannot be comfortable with a society in which some enjoy abundance while others struggle for food, housing or education.

But this vision cannot be achieved through policies and resources alone. It requires ***solidarity.*** Solidarity is more than feeling sorry for people who are struggling. It means recognising that we belong to one another and that the well-being of others is also our concern. This is the spirit of Jesus' words: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me" (Matthew 25:40). We cannot simply say that their problems are theirs to solve.

Solidarity means that we do more than help people when they are in need. We also try to understand why they are struggling in the first place. Giving food to a hungry family is important, but we must also ask why the family cannot afford enough to eat.

Can the parents find decent jobs with wages that are enough to support their family?

Can their children get a good education and a fair chance at a better future? Charity helps people cope with their immediate needs; solidarity also seeks to change the conditions that leave them struggling. Both are necessary if we want to build a society where everyone can live with dignity.

It also means listening to those who experience poverty. They are not merely recipients of our generosity; they have knowledge, experience and ideas that can help shape the decisions affecting their lives. ***A society built on solidarity does not simply decide what is good for people. It gives them a voice in building that common good.***

What does this mean for Malaysia?

We often speak about development and economic growth, but we must also look at how people are actually living. A 2024 study by UNICEF Malaysia and the Penang Institute found that more than 60 per cent of surveyed low-income households in Penang had no savings left from their monthly income. The study also found that eggs had replaced meat as the main source of protein, following a substantial decline in meat consumption. The situation is even more concerning in Sabah, which recorded Malaysia's highest incidence of absolute poverty (17.7 per cent) in 2024. These findings remind us that even when people are working and earning, many remain financially vulnerable. One unexpected bill can be enough to upset an already fragile household budget.

This makes the responsible use of public money all the more important. The Auditor-General's reports have identified weaknesses ranging from delayed development projects to expenditure made without the required approval. Such findings remind us that public money must not only be allocated; it must be managed properly and deliver what it was intended to achieve.

The question is not whether a country should spend on one need rather than another. It is whether our resources are being used wisely, whether those responsible are held accountable, and whether the needs of people who struggle to live with dignity receive the attention they deserve. When families have to cut back on what they eat, while public institutions fail to manage money properly, we have good reason to ask whether we are being faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Public money belongs to the people and must serve the people. Corruption, waste and poor management are not merely administrative failures; they undermine the common good and can deprive communities of resources they need.

The Church must live what it teaches

The same questions must be asked of the Church. Our parishes and dioceses depend on the generosity of people who contribute their money, time and talents.

These resources are entrusted to us for our mission and must be managed responsibly. But the issue is not only how much we spend on charitable works. It is also about who has a voice when our priorities are decided.

If we speak about the dignity of the poor but make our pastoral plans without listening to them, something is missing. Programmes for marginalised communities must be shaped with them, not simply designed on their behalf. The poor and marginalised must have a place in the discussions and decisions of our parishes and dioceses, including how we set pastoral priorities, allocate resources and serve our communities. Their participation must begin before decisions are made; it must be part of how we live as Church.

The poor are not simply people who need our help. They belong to the community and have gifts and experience to share. A Christian community should offer a different vision of society: wealth must not buy a greater voice, and poverty must never become a reason for exclusion. If we want a more just society, our own communities must begin to live this vision. We cannot preach that every person has equal dignity while allowing decisions to be shaped only by those who already hold power.

Wealth must bring us closer

The proper use of wealth is not simply about giving away a portion of what we have.

It concerns how we earn, spend and share our resources, the priorities of our governments and businesses, and the way the Church lives its mission. Wealth can create jobs, provide opportunities and improve lives. But it can also protect privilege and leave others struggling. The difference lies in how it is used and who benefits.

When we pray for the proper use of wealth, we are asking for a society where poverty does not determine a child's future, public resources serve the common good, and the poor have a voice in decisions that affect them. We are also asking the Church to become more fully the community it is called to be.

Ultimately, the question is not simply how much wealth we accumulate. It is whether what we have, helps others live with dignity, and whether our wealth brings us closer to one another or pushes us further apart.

Fr Fabian Dicom *is the National Director of Caritas Malaysia.*



Miri at 50

Rooted in faith, renewed for mission

MIRI: The faith that brought the Gospel to northern Sarawak must now inspire another generation to venture into deeper waters, Bishop Richard Ng urged as the Diocese of Miri celebrated its golden jubilee.

Calling Catholics to strengthen unity, collaborate in mission and trust in God, he invited the diocese to honour its pioneers by carrying their work forward with renewed commitment.

About 6,000 people gathered for the Thanksgiving Mass at the Miri Indoor Stadium on October 10. Bishop Richard presided, with about 40 priests concelebrating. Faithful from the diocese's 14 parishes joined religious, Christian leaders from other denominations, community representatives and government officials.

Guided by the anniversary theme, *Into the Deep,* his homily centred on thanksgiving, unity and mission.

Long before the gathering in the stadium, the story of faith in northern Sarawak was unfolding along its rivers and in its longhouses. Following the arrival of the Mill Hill missionaries in Sarawak in 1881, waterways became routes of encounter, carrying missionaries towards communities deep in the interior.

Among the pioneers was Fr Henry Jansen, whose journeys took him from Marudi along the Baram to places such as Long San and Lio Mato. The Church's growth also depended on the initiative of local people. In 1947, communities of the upper Baram sent requests downriver for missionaries to teach them the Christian faith, known as *Adat Sembahyang* — "the Pray Way".

From these encounters grew a Church increasingly rooted in the lives, languages and leadership of its people. The Miri vicariate was established in 1959, and Anthony Lee became its first local priest in 1966. On May 31, 1976, the vicariate was elevated to a diocese — the milestone celebrated at this jubilee. Fr Anthony Lee was ordained bishop the following year.

Bishop Richard paid tribute to the pioneer bishops, Mill Hill missionaries, local clergy, religious sisters, catechists, lay leaders and generations of faithful whose sacrifices nurtured this growth.

"We are here today because of their faith, collaboration, and sacrifices," he said.

Some early missionaries succumbed to tropical diseases while still in their twenties and thirties. Far from home, they gave their lives to the communities they had come to serve.

"They paid for the mission with their lives," Bishop Richard said, urging Catholics never to forget those who prepared the ground for the Church's growth.

That legacy of faith and sacrifice continues to shape the diocese's plans, including the construction of a new St Joseph's Cathedral.

At a Thanksgiving dinner ahead of the anniversary celebration, Bishop Richard announced that building plans for the RM80 million project had been approved and tender documents were being prepared.

"The building plans for the new St Joseph's Cathedral have been approved and we are preparing the tender documents," he said. "We should be able to tender out and start work by the end of this year."

More than RM32.5 million has been collected towards construction. Bishop Richard expressed confidence that further contributions would follow once work begins.

"I have faith that God will send us the money," he said, inviting continued support.

The cathedral will be built along Jalan Miri-Bypass, beside the proposed Association of Churches in Sarawak Miri Ecumenical Centre. Construction is expected to take approximately three years.

The diocese's future also depends on the relationships that sustain its communities.

Drawing on St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Bishop Richard recalled the call to be one body, united in one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God.

In a diocese rich in races, cultures, customs and languages, he urged Catholics to examine whether harmony exists in their parishes, among clergy and religious, within communities and in their families.

"What can I do to promote unity and harmony?" he asked.

He cited the solidarity shown following the death of Fr Francis Kuleh. Mourners came continuously to the wake, some staying overnight, while St Dominic's Church and its adjoining hall were packed for the funeral Mass.

Family members wore specially printed white T-shirts expressing their bond. Such gestures offered a simple example of the belonging and mutual support that should extend across all communities.

Turning to the Gospel's miraculous catch of fish, Bishop Richard identified three essentials for mission: faith, collaboration and reliance on God.

Despite a fruitless night's work, Peter trusted Jesus' word and lowered his nets again. Christians, too, must be willing to respond without demanding certainty.

"If we wait for signs and assurance, we will never go out," Bishop Richard said.

Peter needed James and John to help bring in the catch. Likewise, mission requires the gifts and participation of the whole community. Every baptised person is called, chosen, blessed and sent.

Yet the catch was ultimately the Lord's work. The fruits of mission may take years to appear, requiring patience and perseverance.

Recalling St Teresa of Kolkata, Bishop Richard reminded the congregation: "We are not called to be successful, but faithful."

To guide the diocese over the next five years, he outlined three priorities: forming committed disciples of Christ, equipping every disciple for mission, and encouraging young people to respond to God's call to the priesthood and religious life.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council and the 14 parish pastoral councils will work together to implement them.

These priorities complement the pathways emerging from the recent Malaysia Pastoral Convention: strengthening family life through faith formation; empowering and accompanying young people; and building bridges of unity, dialogue and justice in society. Their shared goal, Bishop Richard stressed, is mission.

Among the jubilee guests were Msgr Marcel Šmejkal, chargé d'affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature in Malaysia; Archbishop Emeritus John Ha; Miri Mayor Adam Yii; and representatives of the Claretian Missionaries, Mensa Domini Sisters and Discalced Carmelite Friars.

Bishop Richard thanked the organising committees, volunteers and collaborators, appealing for continued generosity and participation.

From the river journeys of the early missionaries to the responsibilities facing today's parishes, the call remains one of faith expressed through action. Another generation is now entrusted with carrying the Gospel forward.

"We just have to step out into the deep and trust in God."







What a waste of time



Word Made Flesh

Nicholas Lye



Today I travelled around one hour to the East just to meet one person for close to two hours, then took a half-hour walk to satisfy my inner child's craving for salted coffee, before making the journey home. By worldly standards, it was not a very efficient and productive use of my time. So much time was wasted just for one individual, and for my inner child.

Yet, in that one encounter, tears flowed from the eyes of someone meeting me for the first time, indicating God's healing touch and love flowing through me and into that person in such an unexpected but much-needed way. Tears also flowed from my eyes on the way home, as I realised I would not have been able to accompany that person in such a way had it not been for my years of pain, struggle, and hidden formation doing 'nothing', for God to do so much more in me, and eventually through me.

"Mary… sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to Him speaking... Martha... was distracted with all the serving... It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her." (Luke 10:39-40,42)

For the many times that I have felt that I am not 'doing enough', in comparison to many others within the Church who seem to be doing so much more than me, I am again reminded of the better part of BEING ENOUGH, without which I can never really sit at the Lord's feet, waste time with Him, and really listen intently to what I am meant to do, that is truly based on His call and invitation, and not from my unconscious need to please, perform or prove my worth.

Believe me, I would not have chosen this path as a lay single missionary on my own, especially having grown up in a culture that focuses so much on productivity and performance. Still, by remaining open to His voice and through His grace, I have learnt to trust in His ways beyond worldly standards and have been led to live a lay single life that offers me so much more time and space to listen to His heart, my heart, and the hearts of those He sends me to.

"Understood spiritually, solitude grants single persons the distance and time they need to assess God's will as manifested in the life situation... Living in singleness makes one more perceptive of the will of God in events and people." ('Celebrating the Single Life', Susan Annette Muto)

On another occasion, while taking a bus ride from Singapore to Klang, I was first surprised by how spacious and comfortable the seats were. But what surprised me more was that only two passengers were on the bus, and the driver was willing to drive seven hours for just two people.

This initially affirmed that I would even run a two-hour workshop just for one person. But when I shared this with a friend, she pointed out that I was even willing to travel seven hours to Klang, and seven hours back within the same day, just to meet someone for two hours, and return her luggage that was left behind in Singapore.

Indeed, after years of imagining myself spending a whole day in a parish trying to meet different people and cater to the needs of as many as I could in a single day, never would I have expected God to turn my vocation around and prepare me for my one-sheep ministry, to be willing to even waste an entire day just for one person, because that one person matters that much too.

In economic terms, it does not sound efficient or cost-effective when viewed through the eyes of productivity. But in spiritual terms, through the eyes of God, it really speaks of how much love God has for each of us, that He would be willing to waste His lavish love on us, that we are that important even if it does not make economic sense.

This is the kind of ministry I have been privileged to be called into and see the amazing wonders that such extravagant love does to one person. But it is also more amazing to see each person, through my time wasted on them, begin to inspire and make a difference to the people around them. It is this ripple or multiplier effect that now makes sense to me about why God would waste so much time on each of us. For to Him, it is not the quantity of tasks accomplished that matters as much as the slow but steady growth and development of a person, which in time produces far more lasting fruits in the long run.

This is why I continue to run workshops even for one person, why I remain faithful to the few whom God calls me to minister to, and why I sometimes allow myself to waste an entire day not doing much but simply being in the presence of God's wasteful and extravagant love for me. For I am worth it.

Nicholas *is a lay missionary and creative evangelist who loves to use creativity and various art forms to share the faith and help people encounter God's truths in a fun and meaningful way.*

Try silence



And in the end...

Marge Martinez

I belong to a religion that delights in silence. And how thankful I am for that.

Saints and spiritual writers have always viewed silence as a vital spiritual virtue. Fr Thomas Keating OCSO, a Trappist priest, describes silence as the "first language of God; all else is bad translation." It is widely held that silence is just about the only way to hear the Divine Voice amidst the noise of this intrusive world.

One of my most vivid memories of a pilgrimage to Lourdes with my Mama and younger sister in 2013 was the utter and complete silence when we were gathered in front of the Grotto with hundreds of other people. It was as if the sanctity of the place had stilled our tongues and sealed our lips, made speech completely superfluous, and filled our minds with silent wonder and fervent prayer.

When I was preparing for Confirmation, we were taught about the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I always felt then (as an easily distracted teenager) that the gift I had least affinity with was "Fear of the Lord". It almost sounded more like punishment than a gift! But as an adult I have come to yearn for and cherish this not just as a gift but as a treasure because of what I realise now: it is that feeling of awe and wonder in the presence of my Lord and my God, the smallness of creature before Creator, the surrender of everything before His glory and majesty. Like Elijah at the mouth of the cave, it is the realisation that God is not in a mighty wind, or earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper, a still small voice. (1 Kings 19: 11 – 13) And unless we are silent, how are we to hear Him? Listening, therefore, is as much a part of prayer as speaking to God, making our petitions and reciting our familiar, well-loved prayers. Prayer is pretty much a two-way relationship, and silence creates the physical and mental space to actually hear God's voice.

Another reason for silence is reverence for the sacred. Our churches are not assembly halls or theatres where we gather and chat with one another while waiting for the "show to begin."

We believe in the real presence of Christ in the Tabernacle. We genuflect or bow before entering our pews. Maintaining a quiet atmosphere in Church is a sign of the deep respect which demonstrates the strength of that belief. The silence also allows for prayer in preparation for Holy Communion and thanksgiving after receiving the Blessed Sacrament. I, for one, love being early for Mass as I can't wait to bring my whole week to God with all its ups and downs (as if He doesn't already know) and tell Him about the week ahead, which invariably needs His guidance and active participation. Sadly, though, I notice many who prefer to commune vocally with anyone else but God.

A practice particular to Catholics is that we go on "retreats". I have loved every retreat I have been on, especially eight-day Ignatian silent retreats, and I cannot recommend the practice enough to every Catholic. It is not just for our priests and seminarians, or for those active in ministry in our parishes, or for those preparing for the Sacraments. There are ample opportunities for individuals to sign up for retreats to deepen their spiritual lives and learn to encounter God in silence. The Maranatha House of Prayer *(https://maranathahop.com)* for one, is offering retreats for 2027 in a serene location in Janda Baik. Think of it as "a vacation with the Lord." As Pope St John Paul II said, "In this oasis of quiet, before the wonderful spectacle of nature, one easily experiences how profitable silence is, a good that today is ever more rare…In reality, only in silence does man succeed in hearing, in the depth of his conscience, the voice of God which really makes him free. And vacations can help to rediscover and cultivate this indispensable interior dimension of human life."

Just as Jesus and His disciples used to go away to quiet places for prayer, the Catholic Church has monastic communities of men and women who separate themselves from the world to focus entirely on a life of prayer, work and community. For them, silence is a monastic discipline and is treated as an active, relational practice meant to create space to "listen with the ear of the heart." The strictness and daily application of the rules of silence differ across monastic disciplines. For most, strict silence is observed from after Night Prayer until Mass the next morning. Some, like the Trappists adhere to a more rigorous austere lifestyle and a deeper immersion in silence. For the Carmelites, silence is an active, inner posture of listening and communion with God and forms "a protective boundary around a space to encounter the divine".

So why do we find keeping silent so difficult? In part, we can blame our brains. Because human beings are social animals, our brains are wired to reward talking about oneself. It's referred to as the dopamine rush of self-disclosure. People naturally enjoy talking about themselves. Sometimes we talk because of social anxiety. When someone feels awkward or fears being judged, they fill the silence with nervous chatter. And let's face it, some people simply love the sound of their own voice! Even if we are not actually speaking these days, we are hardly ever "silent" as we send and receive messages interminably on our phones.

And in the end… silence in our world today needs to be actively sought not just a physical silence as in the absence of noise, but an interior silence as in the presence of God.

"God of stillness and creative action,
help us to find space for quietness today,
that we may live creatively,
discover the inner meaning of silence,
and learn the words of wisdom
that heal the world.
Send peace and joy to each quiet place
to all who are waiting and listening.
May your still, small voice be heard
through Christ in the love
of the Holy Spirit,
Amen."

(Taken from a poster at the Maranatha House of Prayer).

Marge *loves retirement because of the time it gives her to read. To play Word Games. To learn new words. To wait upon the Lord and let Him move in her life.*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Work – Hindrance or grace in our spiritual lives?

When I was in high school we read a short German story entitled *Immensee.* It's the story of a love that never happened but should have, except that the tragic hero was never able to express his love to the woman he loved. So, he ended up alone with an aching heart, full of regrets.

The book ends with him reminiscing about the woman's last words to him. When they parted years earlier, she'd said, "I know you'll never come back!" He hadn't realised then how prophetic those words would be. Now, recalling them, he is overcome with regret, and his life feels empty. He's deeply sad. However, after sitting with that melancholy for a while, we are told he went to his desk and, despite nursing that heartache, began again "to work with all the vigour of his youth."

Thank God for work. Sometimes that's the only thing between us and unbearable melancholy. Work is a wonderful, God-given thing.

We lack a good spirituality of work. Too often work is seen as something that takes us away from God and prayer, a distraction from the spiritual life, not a good, honest, holy thing, not a gift from God.

In fact, in some spiritualities, work is seen as a punishment for sin, something introduced on the planet after Adam's sin, not willed or intended by God ideally. In this view, except for sin, there would be no work. It's hard to formulate a healthy theology of work when work is seen as a consequence of sin, as never intended by God.

There is some truth though in the belief that work can be a distraction and an escape (both from God and family) and that it can be a way to avoid facing the deeper things in our lives.

Further still, there's the danger that we take our self-worth from our work, so that we feel good about ourselves only when we are achieving something and are anxious that deep down, outside of our work and our achievements, we have little worth. It's easy to be unconscious of that. And so we tend to put pressure on ourselves to keep working because our sense of self-worth is tied up with our work. That's a perennial danger.

But there are dangers in everything. Work can be an excuse to avoid the deeper issues in our lives, but it is also the deep, natural form of contemplation that God gives to us as humans.

We must spend most of our waking lives working. That should tell us something, namely, that work must be the major avenue through which God wants us to journey towards deeper meaning. Given the way we are built and the way life is shaped, God surely does not expect us to consciously think about Him most of our waking moments.

God is not an egotistical tyrant, demanding our conscious attention, even while we must work long hours amidst all the heartaches, headaches, restlessness, anxieties, fears, and preoccupations that impale themselves upon us every waking minute. If God wants our conscious attention every waking minute, then there is some fatal flaw in the way we are built and the way life is set up.

But there is no fatal flaw. God is the ground of our being, the ground too of our work and our relationships. In God "we live and move and have our being." We know God not just in our conscious awareness and in prayer, but also in a deep inchoate way by participating with Him in building this world – by growing something, building something, carving something, creating something, cleaning something, painting something, writing something, raising children, nursing bodies, teaching others, consoling others, humouring others, struggling with others, and loving others.

Work, like prayer, is a privileged way to get to know God because, when we work, we are toiling in partnership with Him. Jesus knew well both the feel of work and tiredness.

In the spiritual wisdom of monasticism, we find this counsel: *Stay in your cell and it will teach you all you need to know.* That isn't to be taken literally. It's a pregnant metaphor.

Your "cell" is your vocation and occupation in life (husband, wife, father, mother, priest, sister, carpenter, teacher, banker, construction worker, nurse, doctor, janitor, artist, bus driver, computer technician, salesperson, athlete, etc.) If you are faithfully doing the work that this vocation and occupation asks of you, that work will be your path to sanctity, leading you into a community of life with God, others, the world.

There is of course the danger that we can use our busyness to rationalise and excuse ourselves from dealing with family, prayer, and community. Hard work can start as a virtue and turn into a vice, but the greater danger lies in not giving ourselves over to hard work. Work is not a consequence of sin; it's our path to holiness.

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***



Deacon Louis Martin

Behind the collar

We see them at the altar every Sunday, vested and ready, leading us through the familiar rhythms of the Mass. We call them when life falls apart: when a loved one dies, a marriage fractures or a family member is in trouble. We can easily expect our priests to remain steady, strong and endlessly available.

But who carries them when the weight becomes too heavy?

The death by suicide of Fr Bernard Card, 73, parish priest of Sainte-Chantal in Dijon, France, during the night of October 4–5, 2026, brings that question painfully into focus. Archbishop Antoine Hérouard described his death as unexpected and remembered a pastor appreciated by parishioners and trusted by fellow priests.

The archbishop also recalled that Fr Card had been deeply affected by his brother's death by suicide. Some people had noticed that he seemed tired recently. These observations do not explain his death, and we should resist drawing conclusions about suffering we cannot fully know. Our first response must be prayer, compassion and solidarity with everyone grieving.

His death nevertheless invites us to examine how we care for those entrusted with caring for us. Priests share the same humanity as the people they serve. Ordination does not remove grief, illness, anxiety or the need for friendship and professional help.

Care begins with recognising the disciple within the minister. Before a priest preaches, administers a parish or leads a community, he is someone called into friendship with Christ. That relationship needs time and attention.

Yet parish schedules can become crowded with meetings, maintenance problems, financial decisions and requests that seem impossible to refuse. Prayer and rest can be squeezed into whatever remains. A priest's retreat should not depend on his ability to finish an endless list of responsibilities.

Parish councils and ministry leaders can help by sharing administrative work, planning responsibly and protecting time for prayer, spiritual direction and rest. Praying for our priests matters. So does ensuring that they have space to pray themselves.

Spiritual care must also make room for professional mental healthcare. Depression and other mental health conditions are not evidence of weak faith. A priest who seeks counselling, medical assessment or treatment deserves support and respect.

Neither parishioners nor fellow clergy should be expected to diagnose a condition. Changes in someone's behaviour or participation can prompt a caring conversation, but appearances alone cannot tell us how someone is coping. Equally, the absence of obvious distress should not discourage regular, thoughtful contact.

Dioceses should provide accessible, confidential professional support, with clear arrangements for treatment, medical leave and follow-up. Priests need to know where they can turn and that asking for help will be met with care. Where services already exist, the practical question is whether priests know about them, trust them and can use them.

Bishops have a particular responsibility here. A conversation with a priest should sometimes begin and end with his well-being, rather than parish finances or outstanding work. Decisions about workloads and transfers should involve appropriate consultation and attention to individual circumstances, especially when someone is already struggling.

Support also requires real companionship. Being surrounded by people does not necessarily mean having someone with whom one can speak honestly. A priest may spend his day listening to others while feeling uncertain about whom he can approach himself.

Fellow priests can nurture friendships through shared meals, recreation and conversations that allow room for ordinary life. A brother who withdraws from familiar activities needs an invitation and a listening ear. Fraternity becomes credible when vulnerability can be expressed without ridicule, gossip or an immediate judgement about someone's vocation.

Parishioners have a role, too. Respecting a priest's day off, giving reasonable notice for requests and accepting that a message may not receive an immediate reply are practical expressions of care. Parish teams can arrange cover for urgent needs so that rest does not depend on a priest feeling guilty about being unavailable.

A meal offered without expectations, a note of gratitude that requires no reply, or a simple question asked with time to hear the answer can matter. Such gestures should respect personal boundaries. Friendship leaves room for privacy and freedom.

Concern for priests also means resisting unfair attacks and gossip. It must coexist with the right to raise legitimate concerns and seek accountability. A healthy community can care for its priest while addressing problems honestly and through appropriate channels.

To our priests, the message must be equally clear: your life is precious beyond the work you perform. Your worth does not depend on how many Masses you celebrate, how quickly you answer messages or how successfully you manage a parish. You are entitled to receive care as well as give it.

Seeking help is an act of courage. Prayer, friendship and professional treatment can support one another. Rest need not be earned through exhaustion, and admitting difficulty does not cancel the generosity of your vocation. If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide or feel unable to stay safe, seek urgent medical help and tell someone you trust. You deserve support now.

There is hope. Effective treatment and sustained support can help people through severe distress. Our responsibility is to make that support easier to reach, before a crisis and throughout recovery.

Let us pray for Fr Card, his family, his fellow priests and his parish community. Let us also turn concern into habits of care that endure beyond the sadness of a single news report. We cannot know every hidden struggle, but we can build communities in which asking for help is welcomed.

May we have the grace to carry those who carry us, and the humility to recognise when we, too, need to be carried.

Deacon Louis *is a permanent deacon of the Diocese of Malacca Johore, currently serving at the Church of St Louis, Kluang, where he continues to journey with couples and families, accompanying them with pastoral care, wisdom, and a deep commitment to strengthening the sanctity of marriage.*

LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER

Dear children,

Have you ever thought that being happy means having lots of toys, winning a game or getting everything you want? Jesus teaches us that true happiness comes from loving God and showing love to others.

One day, Jesus went up a mountain, sat down, and began teaching His disciples and the crowds. He told them about the kind of people who are blessed by God. These teachings are called the Beatitudes.

Jesus said that God blesses those who are humble, those who are sad and need comfort, and those who are gentle and kind. He blesses people who try to do what is right, forgive others, have a pure heart, and make peace instead of fighting. He also reminds us that even when people treat us badly because we do what is right, God is still with us.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints, we remember the holy men and women who followed Jesus and lived out these teachings. Their lives show us that we, too, can become saints by loving God and caring for others.

Remember, children, being blessed means loving God and others. When we choose kindness, forgiveness, and peace, we follow Jesus and the saints. What small act of kindness will you do this week?



Love, Aunty C



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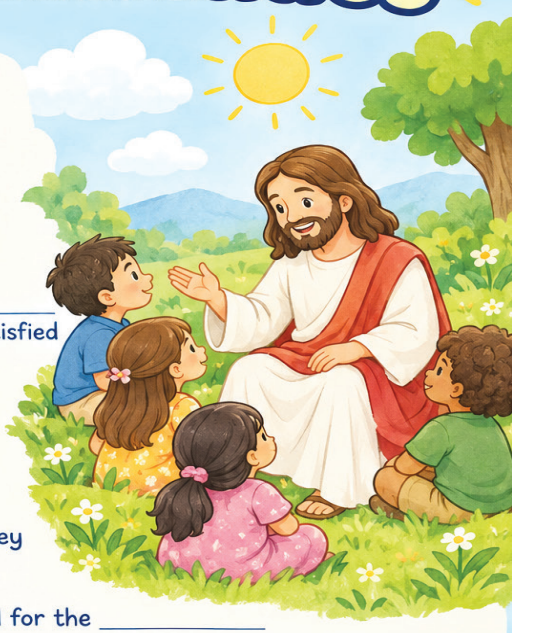
M	A	T	S	T	J	P	L	E	S	E	C	N	A	D
E	U	R	P	F	I	L	L	E	D	D	I	X	N	O
E	Z	F	T	H	S	B	P	X	R	I	P	L	Q	M
K	Z	H	U	H	U	C	J	L	H	O	H	C	M	R

KINGDOM	MERCY	EARTH	FILLED	MOURN
HUNGER	HEART	SPIRIT	BLESSED	INHERIT
THIRST	MEEK	PURE	POOR	HEAVEN

The Beatitudes



Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of _____

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be _____

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the _____

Blessed are they who _____ and _____ for righteousness, for they will be satisfied

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown _____

Blessed are the clean in _____, for they will see God

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called _____ of God

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the _____ of righteousness, for theirs is the _____ of heaven

Blessed are you when they insult you and _____ you and utter every kind of evil against you because of me

Rejoice and be glad, for your _____ will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the _____ who were before you

Word Bank

Use this word bank to fill in the beatitudes

prophets	hunger	land	persecute	heart	kingdom	mercy
heaven	comforted	sake	children	reward	thirst	

COLOUR THE PICTURE



YOUTH

Plug In Petaling brings campus students together



PETALING JAYA: Approximately 55 Catholic university and college students gathered at the Church of St Thomas More (STM) for *PLUG IN: Petaling Campus Gathering* on October 11. It was, organised under Campus Line ArchKL by the Archdiocesan Single Adults & Youth Office (ASAYO KL), in collaboration with St Thomas More Campus Ministry.

Following the encouraging response to the inaugural Plug In gathering held in the KL District in May, Plug In Petaling marked the next instalment of the initiative, this time reaching students studying and residing within the Petaling District, with the majority of participants coming from campuses around Subang.

Held once again under the theme, "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20), the gathering sought to create a welcoming space for students to pause amidst campus life, encounter God, connect with fellow Catholics, and recognise that they do not have to journey through their university years alone.

The programme began with an interactive activity centred on the realities of campus life. Through a series of prompts, students were invited to anonymously share their experiences, struggles, needs and things they were grateful for using post-it notes. Responses reflected familiar realities such as academic pressure, uncertainty, loneliness, relationships, family, friendship and faith.

Many of these themes echoed those that had surfaced during Plug In KL, highlighting how students across different campuses and districts often find themselves navigating similar hopes, questions and challenges.

During the main input, Martin Koh, Campus Minister of St Thomas More, reflected on Jesus' promise in Matthew 28:20, reminding participants that difficult or uncertain seasons in campus life do not mean that God is absent, and encouraging them to remain attentive to His voice amid the demands and distractions of campus life.

The input concluded with a short time of Adoration, giving participants the space to quiet themselves, listen for God's voice, and experience His presence.





The gathering also included a small-group sharing, where participants reflected on their current season of life and shared about their faith journey. These conversations gave students space to listen to one another, share openly, and recognise that many of the hopes, struggles and questions they carry are also shared by others.

The afternoon concluded with a closing prayer and blessing by Fr Michel Dass.

As Campus Line ArchKL draws its programmes for the year to a close, Catholic students from universities and colleges across the Archdiocese will come together for *Pesta K.A.M.I – Campus Edition 2026* on Nov 14 at the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang, held in conjunction with the local World Youth Day celebration.

Guided by the theme, *Take courage! I have overcome the world* (Jn 16:33), the gathering will feature formation by Brother Jean-Patrick of the Taizé Community, fellowship, a showcase of CSS booths from campuses across the Archdiocese, small-group conversations, contemplative prayer in the spirit of Taizé, Adoration and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Religious will also be present throughout the gathering to accompany and journey with the young people.

Campus students who wish to join *Pesta K.A.M.I – Campus Edition 2026* may register at: *asayokl.my/PK26.*

Through Campus Line ArchKL, the hope is that students will continue to encounter Christ, find community, and grow in their sense of belonging to the Church even beyond the programmes of the year. **ASAYO KL**

Pope Leo urges young people to register for 2027 World Youth Day



VATICAN: On the feast day of Pope St John Paul II — the creator of World Youth Day — Pope Leo XIV sends a message to young people around the world, urging them to register for WYD Seoul 2027, saying it will offer an experience of "an even greater sense of unity, for we are all members of the one Body of Christ."

With less than a year until the next World Youth Day (WYD) in Seoul, South Korea, registration has officially opened.

In a video message sent to young people around the globe on October 22, Pope Leo XIV urged them to sign up, but not just to "see a new city." Rather, he explained, his is a "call to set out on a pilgrimage of faith, friendship and hope."

A pilgrimage, he said, offers the chance to both discover Christian sites in a different place and to have time and space to encounter God on a deeper level, personally, and communally in the Church.

This 17th international World Youth Day will be an opportunity for young people from around the world to meet in one place, showcasing the rich and beautiful difference of languages and cultures.

"Yet, despite these differences, and indeed because of your God-given diversity, you will experience an even greater sense of unity, for we are all members of the one Body of Christ," the Pope stressed.

For young people, Pope Leo explained, WYD 2027 will be an opportunity to deepen their faith and meet their brothers and sisters in Christ. He expressed his wish that they "will make joyful memories and form friendships that will last a lifetime."

Bring your hopes, struggles, and dreams

The theme for Seoul is *Take courage! I have overcome the world.* October 22 marked the feast day of Pope St John Paul II, who repeated this message to the world: "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ."

These words of the Pope who began the World Youth Days continue to be true for all people today. With that in mind, Pope Leo challenged the young people to "bring all that you are and all that you carry in your hearts, including your dreams, desires, and hopes, as well as your wounds and struggles."

God, the Pope stressed, is waiting for them at WYD. He calls each of them by name, and He wants to "reawaken your hope and to give you the fullness of life and joy."

Pope Leo concluded his video message saying he is looking forward to seeing everyone in Seoul and offering his blessing upon all the young people and their loved ones. **Vatican News**

Chains to Freedom



PETALING JAYA: In 1776, John Nixon, a military official in the American Revolutionary War, declared that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" are "unalienable Rights" endowed by the Creator. Nixon, therefore, was the first to publicly read out what we now know as America's Declaration of Independence. In a different form, the modern man now fights against the antithesis of 'freedom' — shackles borne from a far too common a cause: addictions.

Hence, in conjunction with World Mental Health Day, and to better facilitate conversations around the matter and to help parishioners grow as a community- the Assumption Youth Ministry (AYM) was very proud to have hosted a workshop session titled *Chains to Freedom* conducted by Ethan Saeshanathan and his team from Triangles Psychology & Psychiatry centre on October 10 at the Assumption Family House.

The night's first speaker was Chris Sekar, a recovering addict for 40 years. He delved into the complex issue of understanding how addictions work and its connection to the family. Chris relayed his own story about how close family members had struggled with addictions, which eventually influenced him to follow suit, thus showing the strong influence one's environment can have on how addictions may occur. Chris also shared, in response to a question of how important being loved is in influencing addictions, that one of the major turning points in his life was realising that Christ loved him. How he surrendered to God, and how love was what saved him.

Next was Sitra Panirsheeluam who provided the perspective of a behavioural therapist on the different causes, correlates and effects of addiction through conditions such as Autism, ADHD. She explained how these and the object of addiction (i.e. substance abuse, gadget abuse, hoarding) influences the reward pathways in the brain and changes the addicts' neurochemistry to continue engaging in said addiction. She also briefly went through different assessment tools that can detect these changes and different interventions that can be applied on the road to recovery.

We also went more into the Catholic perspective on mental health with our speaker, Cynthia Shoba, a counsellor. She talked about how sexuality not only plays a role, but also acts as a major entry point into a binding relationship with sexual sin. She went through different case studies and also broke down the different social and intrinsic factors that foster a long term cultivation of addictive behaviours that are sexual in nature, especially among youth (i.e. explicit images to revisiting pornographic websites to more sexually deviant behaviours).

Finally it was Ethan, whose topic was perhaps the most sensitive- how parents might be enablers of addictions. Recalling multiple instances where one of the two parents would often 'shield' the child from their spouse, Ethan went into how these small acts actually feed into addiction behaviours. Difficult as it may be, having to identify that one is not an 'enabler' of addictions often takes introspection and the ability to admit fault. For love does not mean permitting everything.

Long before John Nixon read out America's version of freedom. A certain Son of Man already declared: "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" John 8:36.

"Lord, I'll take that freedom now, please. Before so, however, I first give myself wholly to Thee."

You may find Triangles Psychiatry & Psychological Support on social media IG, Threads and Tik Tok, or contact Ethan Saesha at 017-2109863 or Sitra Panirsheeluam at 012-916 9672.



NEWLY CONFIRMED URGED TO DISCOVER THEIR MISSION

MELAKA: Discover your mission and be Christ's light, voice, hands and feet in the world. This was Bishop Bernard Paul's call to 66 young Catholics who received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Church of St Theresa on October 18.

Celebrated on the 100th World Mission Sunday, the occasion brought together 46 candidates from the Church of Theresa — 34 from the Mandarin section and 12 from the English section — and 20 from the Church of St Peter.

The 11.15am bilingual Mass, was concelebrated by parish priests Fr Thomas Chong SJ and Fr Lionel Thomas.

Welcoming the congregation, Bishop Bernard, the main celebrant, linked the celebration to the Church's missionary calling and invited everyone to pray that the candidates would grow into people who serve others and become future Church leaders.

Following the Gospel, Fr Thomas presented the candidates, who were accompanied by their sponsors. Acknowledging their preparation through catechism classes, Confirmation camps and the support of parents and sponsors, the bishop asked whether they were ready to receive the sacrament. They responded with a firm "yes".

Reflecting on the World Mission Sunday's theme, *One in Christ, United in Mission,* Bishop Bernard reminded them that all Christian mission begins with Christ, who calls and sends His followers to continue His work.

Every baptised person, he said, has a mission. He encouraged the candidates to ask what God was calling them to do and to put their faith into action.

The bishop urged them to bring Christ's light into situations of darkness and despair, use their voices to witness to God's goodness and carry the Good News wherever they went.

Their task was to share the faith and help others encounter Jesus, trusting in the strength and courage given by the Holy Spirit. Popularity, he reminded them, was less important than faithfulness to their calling.

They would not undertake this mission alone: Christ had promised to remain with His followers until the end of time.

Fr Thomas also offered a brief reflection in Mandarin.

Before administering the sacrament, Bishop Bernard invited the candidates to open their hearts to God's presence. Sponsors and the congregation joined in praying that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit would strengthen them to become mature and courageous witnesses of Christ.

After Mass, the bishop presented certificates to three representatives from St Theresa's English and Mandarin sections and St Peter's.

Two newly confirmed youth, on behalf of their classmates, thanked the celebrants, catechists, parents and sponsors. They recognised Confirmation as the beginning of a new chapter, calling them to live their faith, serve others and share the Gospel. **Bernard Anthony**

BECOMING NEW SAINTS OF TODAY

TAIPING: Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation was a transformative milestone in my faith journey. While the entire Mass was filled with sacred reverence, one specific moment stands out above all and deeply resonates within my heart: kneeling at the altar to be blessed by Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang.

In that sacred stillness, as he anointed me with Holy Chrism, an overwhelming sense of peace and comfort washed over me. It felt as though time paused, allowing me to truly feel the gentle yet powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Confirmation Mass was celebrated at the Taiping Catholic Church on October 18, with Cardinal Sebastian presiding. Parish priest, Msgr Stephen Liew, concelebrated with Deacons Charles Lazaroo and Rocky Loo assisting.

In his homily, Cardinal Sebastian encouraged those receiving Confirmation to "reject fear" and embrace Christ wholeheartedly. Drawing from Pope Leo XIV's message to young people in Assisi, Italy, he urged them to "become the new saints of today", reminding them that their weaknesses and limitations should not prevent them from pursuing holiness.

His words reminded me that receiving the Holy Spirit is not merely about experiencing a sacred moment but allowing that encounter to transform the way I live. Faith requires courage, trust in Christ, and a willingness to respond to God's call, even when I feel uncertain or inadequate.

The cardinal also highlighted the importance of mission and communion, sharing Pope Leo's call for Catholics to "be one in Christ and be united in mission" on World Mission Sunday. He reminded the congregation that the Holy Spirit empowers the faithful not only for their personal spiritual growth, but also to serve others and participate actively in the life of the Church.

This message gave me a deeper understanding of Confirmation. The sacrament is not the end of my religious journey, but a beginning that calls me to grow in faith, serve others, and become more involved in the Church.

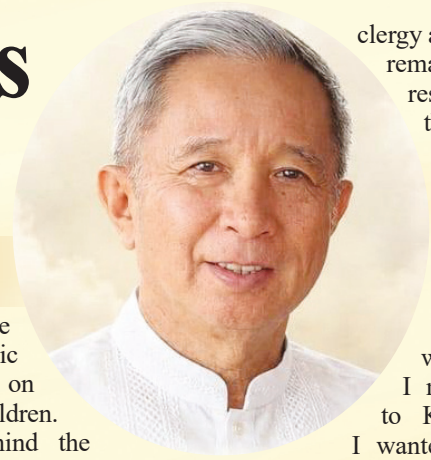
Walking away from the altar, I carried with me a renewed desire to return to the Church, participate actively in its life, and live out God's purpose every day. I now see my faith not as a finished path, but as an ongoing journey of growth, service and love.

Although I still have my limitations and weaknesses, I am learning that these need not prevent me from answering God's call. Through the Holy Spirit, I hope to continue growing in faith and become a better witness to Christ's love in my daily life. **Geraldine Sherwina Ann**



Dominic Lim: the quiet hands behind a living church

November 11, 1956 - October 18, 2026



Joseph Tek Choon Yee

Some build the Church from the pulpit. Others serve quietly through pastoral plans, parish programmes, youth formation and compassionate outreach. Dominic Lim belonged to the latter, yet the fruits of his work extended far beyond the offices where they began.

Affectionately known as Dom, he died on October 18, weeks before his 70th birthday. For 31 years, he served the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu in administration, pastoral planning, youth ministry, human development and migrant care. His story speaks less of titles than of faithful lay service.

A lasting contribution was the Diocesan Organisational Pastoral Plan (DOPP). Dominic helped draft it in 1996, ahead of its launch on Sept 16, 1997. It envisioned Christ-centred communities journeying together in faith, hope and love, with clergy, religious and laity sharing responsibility for the Church's mission.

On its twentieth anniversary in 2017, he observed, "The journey towards the dream will take time." Though the plan's seven-year timeframe had passed, its vision remained unfinished. Genuine renewal, he understood, lay in hearts and relationships, not merely documents. As Archdiocesan Executive Secretary, he welcomed visiting parish councillors to the Archdiocesan Centre, explaining how its offices supported parish life. For Dom, administration served communion.

His work with young Catholics deserves particular remembrance. In 2014, he facilitated Catholic Social Teaching sessions for organisers preparing for the fourth Sabah Youth Day, helping them connect faith with human rights, justice, work and care for creation.

At the second St Aloysius Youth Camp in Limbanak in 2016, Dominic listened to young people's reflections on Church history and mercy before offering catechesis. It was a revealing approach: listen before guiding. The following month, at the Youth Jubilee of Mercy in Likas attended by more than 1,000 young Catholics, he addressed secularisation and the place of God in public and private life. He treated youth not merely as tomorrow's Church, but as part of its mission today.

That same concern extended to those on society's margins. In 2005, Dominic joined Fr Ambrose Atang, Sr Angeline Peter and lay colleagues in studying Catholic Social Teaching as a response to social needs. The group supported a cross-border counter-trafficking initiative in 2008 and 2009. In 2010, its efforts grew into the Archdiocesan Human Development Commission (AHDC), with Fr Ambrose as spiritual adviser and Dominic as coordinator.

AHDC subsequently developed parish networks, awareness programmes and support for migrants, working with Sabah's other dioceses. Through AMOS *(Allah Mengasihi Orang Miskin),* a joint pastoral initiative of Sabah's three Catholic dioceses, Dominic helped advance dialogue on migrant families and children. He recognised that behind the language of migration were people seeking safety, schooling, livelihood and belonging.

In a 2016 interview, he urged Catholics to overcome prejudice and unfounded fears about foreigners. He later chaired the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei from 2019 to 2021. Following an Archdiocesan reorganisation in 2020, he headed the Archdiocesan Commission for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants (ACMI), guided by four principles: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. During the pandemic, he drew attention to migrants separated from family and struggling with uncertainty.

Yet Dom's legacy extended far beyond his appointments and achievements. Linda Edward, who worked closely with him, recalled a man who loved the Church because, to him, the Church was its people. He held firm convictions on matters that mattered, yet remained remarkably non-judgmental, welcoming everyone with genuine warmth and compassion. It was a rare combination of conviction, humility and openness as the enduring strength behind his ministry.

Working alongside the local Ordinaries, clergy and parish leaders, Dom remained steadfast in his responsibilities despite the challenges of Church life, never losing hope that its dreams and vision would one day be realised. Linda described him as "a true image of Church".

My own acquaintance with Dom began after I moved from Sandakan to Kota Kinabalu. When I wanted to write about the DOPP and Sabah's Catholic history, I approached him for insights into the Church's journey and found someone who had helped shape it. Though already frail, he exchanged thoughts with me, and I shared writings for his comments.

Hearing colleagues and Church friends recall Dom's kindness and service has deepened my appreciation of the faithful Catholic layman behind the work. Within the responsibilities entrusted to him, he offered his abilities and heart to the fullest. Perhaps his finest legacy was not merely the ministries he helped build, but the exceptional character he embodied: principled without prejudice, steadfast without pride, welcoming without distinction and faithful without wavering.

To his family and loved ones, we offer our prayers. The most fitting tribute is to continue what he began: strengthen community, welcome the vulnerable and nurture young faith.

His memorial invokes Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Rest in peace, Dom. I came to you to learn the Church's history. Today, I write with gratitude for the part you played in making it. May the Lord welcome you into eternal peace.



File photo of Dominic Lim during the Archdiocesan Commission for Pastoral Care on Migrants and Itinerants meeting in 2025. (ACMI facebook)



The late Dominic Lim with staff of the Kota Kinabalu Archdiocesan Youth Office.



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Saints show us 'history shaped by faith'

VATICAN: Formally "canonised holiness", whether of ancient saints or more recent witnesses of the faith, must be substantiated by "authentic, credible testimony that is beyond any suspicion", Pope Leo told members of the Dicastery for the Causes of the Saints, who were taking part in the *Holiness in History* conference in Rome.

Reflecting on the relationship between holiness and history — the theme of the conference — Pope Leo explained that the use of historical methods in causes for canonisation is not simply to "produce historiography", but to "bring to light the exemplary life, spirituality, and reputation for holiness" of prospective saints.

The Pope went on to explain that historical investigation must also consider how "historical and cultural evolution […] influences the very concept of holiness".

This does not mean that holiness changes with time; instead, it shows us how "to interpret specific lived experience through the lens of the Gospel."



Pope Leo XIV with participants in "Holiness in History" Conference (Vatican Media)

The people of God, he said, "seek models for living in the present — intercessors who can help members of the Church face today's challenges and recognise the opportunities they hold".

Finally, Pope Leo said, "we must consider how the presence and witness of the saints have transformed history" by responding to God's call in their own circumstances, "uniting faith with history and dedicating their lives" to building up the Kingdom of God.

"The witness of the saints", the Pope said in conclusion, "reminds us of the innovative and transformative power of Easter. They show us a history shaped by faith". **Vatican News**

Abu Dhabi celebrates St Francis' legacy of fraternity and dialogue

ABU DHABI: St Francis of Assisi's writings offer an enduring witness to fraternity, peace, and dialogue, Bishop Paolo Martinelli said at a gathering in Abu Dhabi marking the 800th anniversary of the Italian saint's death.

Around 50 people attended the October 19 event at the Italian Cultural Institute, held during the *Week of the Italian Language in the World.*

The Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia organised the event with the Italian Embassy in the United Arab Emirates and the Institute.

Italy's Ambassador to the UAE, Lorenzo Fanara, opened the evening, which brought together reflections on Franciscan spirituality, interreligious dialogue, literature, and sustainable art.

The event considered the relevance of St Francis' legacy in the Arabian Peninsula, where dialogue between different cultures and religions is part of daily life.

Bishop Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia, opened his address with St Francis' greeting: "May the Lord give you peace."

He described the saint's writings as "few and brief, but extraordinarily intense, profound, and in many ways groundbreaking."

Their rediscovery, he explained, allows readers to encounter St Francis speaking about his own life and the religious order he founded.

The texts include rules and exhortations, letters, and prayers. Among them, the *Canticle of Brother Sun* holds a distinctive place in Italian vernacular literature and expresses St Francis' extraordinary familiarity with all Creation.

Fraternity, peace, and dialogue, Bishop Martinelli said, were more than universal values: they reflected a personal journey that transformed the saint's life.

St Francis initially aspired to chivalry and victory in battle. He became a man of peace through failure, the horror of war, and his encounter with Christ.

His conversion also changed his relationship with people he once avoided. Drawing close to lepers, he learned to recognise others as brothers and sisters.



Bishop Paolo Martinelli (center) with other dignitaries at the event in Abu Dhabi. (Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia / AVOSA)

"What was bitter to me became sweetness of soul and body," Bishop Martinelli recalled St Francis writing in his testament.

This fraternity extended to creation. In the Canticle, the sun becomes a brother and the moon a sister, while praise embraces forgiveness, patient suffering, and even "sister death."

The bishop also recalled St Francis' encounter with Sultan Malik Al Kamil and his guidance to friars living among Muslims, asking them to avoid quarrels and disputes and approach others with humility.

Fr Stefano Luca, director of the Vicariate's Interfaith and Ecumenical Dialogue Office, emphasised that St Francis' social significance flows from his relationship with God.

Although often presented as a philanthropist, environmentalist, or peacemaker, he was, above all, "a man in love with God," Fr Luca said.

Professor Roberto Catalano of Sophia University Institute explored the connection between St Francis and Pope Francis, particularly through fraternity and the desire to build positive relations with the Muslim world.

Emirati artist and engineer Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Mualla addressed sustainability and the Franciscan love of creation, drawing on his work transforming discarded materials into functional art.

Ambassador Fanara highlighted dialogue, mutual understanding, encounters between cultures and faiths, and environmental sustainability as values that continue to inspire Italian foreign policy.

He also recalled St Francis' significance as one of the earliest great poets in the Italian language. **Vatican News**



(Archdiocese of Kuching facebook)

Kuching takes faith to the streets for golden jubilee

KUCHING: A Eucharistic procession through the city brought together more than 2,000 Catholics on October 18, marking the Archdiocese of Kuching's golden jubilee with a public expression of faith and gratitude for its missionary heritage.

The celebration at the Cathedral of St Joseph also marked the 100th World Mission Sunday, linking thanksgiving for generations of missionaries with the Church's continuing mission today.

The faithful began arriving at the cathedral compound as early as 2.00pm for the 4.00pm Mass celebrated by Archbishop Simon Poh.

Speaking before Mass, Archbishop Simon paid tribute to the Mill Hill Missionaries, who arrived on July 10, 1881, and to the generations who helped establish and nurture the local Church.

"We are grateful. We remember with gratitude the Mill Hill Missionaries who laid the foundation on their arrival here on July 10, 1881," he said.

He acknowledged the contributions of bishops, priests, religious sisters, catechists and the many men and women whose service had helped the Church grow. Remembering those who had died, he invited the congregation to pray for their eternal rest in the risen Lord.

Archbishop Simon also recalled the archdiocese's establishment on May 31, 1976. Its first archbishop, Archbishop Emeritus Peter Chung, was succeeded by Archbishop Emeritus John Ha in 2003. Archbishop Simon assumed leadership in 2017.

The congregation's diversity found expression in the multilingual celebration, which included English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, Iban and Bidayuh. Parishioners from Holy Spirit Parish, Lundu, attended in traditional Bidayuh attire.

At about 5.20pm, the faithful set out on the 3.8km procession, *pic,* with the Blessed Sacrament carried in a monstrance at its centre.

Beginning at the cathedral, the route passed along Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, Jalan Barrack, Jalan Pearl, Jalan McDougall, Wayang Street and Main Bazaar before returning to the cathedral.

At Padang Merdeka, Archbishop Simon raised the monstrance in blessing, bringing the Eucharistic celebration into the heart of the city.

The procession concluded at about 7.10pm, drawing to a close an afternoon that brought together the archdiocese's missionary history, cultural diversity and shared faith. **Borneo Post**

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