

# ACT TOGETHER



# to heal humanity

**VATICAN:** Pope Leo XIV has called on the world's religions to "walk together in hope" and "act together" to face the crises threatening humanity — from war and environmental destruction to the misuse of religion and artificial intelligence.

Presiding over the celebration of the 60th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's historic declaration on interreligious dialogue, the Pope said the document planted "a seed of hope" that has now grown "into a mighty tree bearing the fruits of understanding, friendship, cooperation, and peace."

The event, titled *Walking Together in Hope*, was held on October 28 in the Paul VI Hall, attended by representatives of world religions, diplomats, and Vatican officials. It opened with a colourful procession that included leaders from Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Taoism, Jainism, Shintoism, and traditional African religions. Performances from around the world, including a traditional Sri Lankan Kandyan dance, added cultural richness to the evening.

Cardinals George Jacob Koovakad, prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, and Kurt Koch, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, welcomed the

2,000 guests. Among the speakers were Master Hsin Tao, founder of the Ling Jiou Mountain monastery and Museum of World Religions in Taiwan, and Sarah Bernstein, executive director of the Rössing Center for Education and Dialogue in Jerusalem.

In his address, Pope Leo said dialogue among religions is "not a tactic or tool, but a way of life — a journey of the heart that transforms everyone involved." Authentic dialogue, he emphasised, "begins not in compromise but in conviction — in the deep roots of our belief that give us strength to reach out in love."

Recalling the origins of *Nostra Aetate*, first intended as a reflection on the Church's relationship with Judaism, the Pope reaffirmed the Church's rejection of all forms of anti-Semitism. "The Church does not tolerate anti-Semitism and fights against it on the basis of the Gospel itself," he said, drawing applause.

Highlighting the document's ongoing relevance, Pope Leo reminded listeners that *Nostra Aetate* teaches how "all humanity belongs to one family with one origin and one goal," and that the Church "rejects nothing that is true and holy" in other religions. Its central message, he said, remains "rooted in love — the only foundation of peace, justice, and reconciliation."

During his General Audience in St Peter's Square the next morning, Pope Leo continued his reflection on interreligious

dialogue, urging faith communities to unite in confronting "the suffering of humanity, environmental degradation, and the misuse of religion and technology."

"More than ever, our world needs our unity, our friendship, and our collaboration," he said. "Each one of our religions can contribute to alleviating human suffering and caring for our common home, our planet Earth."

The Pope warned against "religious fundamentalism and extremism" and the "abuse of the name of God" for violence. He also cautioned that artificial intelligence, if misused, could "gravely violate human dignity." Faith traditions, he added, have a vital role to play in "humanising technology" and safeguarding moral responsibility.

Echoing the spirit of *Nostra Aetate*, Pope Leo invited religious leaders to renew hope in a world "devastated by war and a degraded environment." He urged them to help their people "break free from the chains of prejudice, anger, and hatred," and to become "prophets of our time — voices that denounce violence and injustice, heal division, and proclaim peace."

Quoting Pope St John Paul II, who hosted the 1986 Assisi gathering of world religions, Pope Leo concluded: "If the world is going to continue, and men and women are to survive in it, the world cannot do without prayer."

He then led the participants in a moment of silent prayer, invoking, "May peace come down upon us and fill our hearts." **Agencies**

### What is *Nostra Aetate*?

Promulgated on October 28, 1965, *Nostra Aetate* (*In Our Time*) is the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*. It marked a historic turning point, affirming that all humanity shares a common origin and destiny in God. The document encourages mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration among believers of different faiths. It rejects discrimination and all forms of anti-Semitism, and recognises the truth and holiness present in other religions. Rooted in the Gospel, *Nostra Aetate* remains the Church's guiding light for interreligious dialogue and the pursuit of peace.



For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. *1 Cor. 3:9-10*



**The heart remembers what the mind forgets**

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**South Johor Vicariate unites in faith at Eucharistic Congress**

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**Bringing Christ's light to the heart of the jungle**

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# HERALD

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# Guiding the young with love, not fear

Recent violent incidents in Malaysian schools and hostels have deeply alarmed everyone especially parents and educators. Bullying, fighting, and even killings among students reflect a profound moral and social crisis. These are not merely disciplinary issues — they are signs of broken relationships, eroded empathy, and a weakening of values. While discipline is necessary, corporal punishment such as caning cannot address the root problems. It may instill fear, but not virtue.

The Catholic Church teaches that true education nurtures self-control, compassion, and respect for human dignity, never relying on fear or force. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC 2221–2222) reminds us, parents and educators must form children through love, patience, and guidance. Jesus himself taught by example. He was firm in truth, yet gentle in correction. His love was not permissive but transformative, inviting repentance and renewal of heart.

Modern challenges, however, complicate this sacred responsibility. Social media, violent online games, and the constant presence of screens expose children to content that shapes their thoughts and emotions. Some imitate what they see online — aggression, revenge, or even disregard for life. Catholic teaching emphasises that *parents are the primary educators* of their children (CCC 2221), responsible for guiding them in truth, love, and moral discernment.

But in today's high-pressured world, this is not easy. Many parents work long hours, leaving their children in the care of grandparents, maids, aftercare centres, or alone with gadgets. Family meals, conversations,

and shared prayer, once central to family life, are often replaced by screens and silence. Yet, children crave presence more than possessions. They need love that listens, boundaries that protect, and example that inspires. Spending time with children, though difficult, remains one of the most powerful ways parents can communicate love and form character.

Though Malaysia no longer has widespread Catholic schools, our parishes remain vital centres for moral and spiritual formation. Catechism classes, youth groups, and parish ministries must be more than programmes — they must be safe, nurturing spaces where children encounter Christ's love and learn to live it. St Paul reminds us, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ... For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Every place where children gather, schools, hostels, or churches, must reflect this holiness, dignity, and protection.

The Church and families must work hand in hand to foster safe, values-based communities. The Second Vatican Council's *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education) emphasises that education is a shared responsibility among parents, teachers, and society. It calls for collaboration in forming young people to be morally mature, socially responsible, and spiritually alive. This means monitoring what children see and hear, teaching them peaceful ways to resolve conflict, nurturing empathy, and guiding them to choose good over evil.

In our parishes, safeguarding must become second nature. Those serving the vulnerable

be they *catechists, youth coordinators, volunteers*, must be properly trained and guided to recognise and prevent abuse or harm. Children should feel safe, respected, and valued in every Church activity. It is often said, "It takes a village to raise a child." In the Church, we might say: *It takes a community of faith to form a disciple.*

Addressing violence in schools, and the wider erosion of values, requires a holistic response: loving but firm discipline, vigilant parental guidance, sound moral education, and the Church's active involvement. As *St John Paul II* affirmed in *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), parents are the first and irreplaceable educators of their children, and society must support them in promoting respect, dignity, and the love of God.

The time to act is now. Parents, educators, and Church leaders must ensure that children are not only safe, but also morally guided and spiritually nourished. Families must reclaim their role as the first schools of love. Parishes must renew their mission to be havens of safety, learning, and compassion. Together, we can raise a generation that values life, respects others, and lives Christ's love in every action.

The safety, well-being, and moral formation of our children depend on all of us — at home, in schools, and in the Church. Let us, as a community of faith, answer this call with courage, wisdom, and compassion. For in the words of Jesus, "Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" (Matthew 19:14).

Sandra Ann

## Celebrate being Church!

How wonderful that first celebration must have been in Rome and throughout the Church when Pope Sylvester I dedicated the Basilica of St John Lateran in 324.

Up to 313 AD Christians had been persecuted. But with the Edict of Milan in 313, Christianity was recognised by the Empire. The Emperor Constantine, prompted by his mother, St Helena, gave part of his residence, the Lateran Palace, to be used by Miltiades, the Bishop of Rome. Only nine years before in what was truly the lowest point of the Roman Empire, little 12 year old St Agnes had been paraded through Rome on her way to a horrible place that children shouldn't even know exist, and on her way to martyrdom. But in 313 a great change came. A sign of this change was that Christians now had their own churches, places where they could meet to praise God.

Today's celebration of the Dedication of St John Lateran reminds us that we are the Church. In the second reading, St Paul tells the people of Corinth that we are the Temple of God, the Spirit of God dwells in us.

We treasure our relationship with Jesus

Christ. We each speak to him throughout our day. But we recognise that our individual relationship with the Lord comes from our communal relationship to Him. We are the community of the Lord.

We are the Church. It is the Church that provides us with baptism, the sacrament where we are transformed by the Life of God. It is the Church that renews Pentecost within each of us giving us the Power of the Holy Spirit at our confirmation. It is the Church that nourishes us with the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the Church that gives us the gift of penance, forgiveness, and healing, the sacrament of the anointing.

It is the Church that elevates marriages from civil relationships to the very presence of Christ in the woman and man's love. It is the Church that provides us with priests to continue our sacramental life. It is the Church that renews the sacrifice of the Cross on our altars every time Mass is celebrated. We are the Church.

When I travel, I enjoy visiting the churches of the area. Sometimes, I'm in a basilica or

## Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Msgr Joseph Pellegrino

### Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (C)

Readings: *Ezekiel 47:1–2, 8–9, 12;*  
*1 Corinthians 3:9–11, 16–17;*  
Gospel: *John 2:13–22*

a cathedral from the Middle Ages or even earlier. I try to imagine the prayers that had gone up there in that church, prayers during traumatic times, like during famines, plagues or wars. Prayers during celebrations like military victories, coronations, and sacraments, weddings and baptisms and ordinations. Sometimes I feel like the rocks of these churches are alive with the prayers of the people of the past and the present. When we celebrate a church, be it the dedication of St John Lateran in Rome or the consecration of any church, we celebrate the people of that Church whose prayers unite them to the Universal Church, rendering the Presence of the Lord real.

St John Lateran is the Pope's church. It is the Cathedral of Rome. We celebrate that church on this feast. At the same time, we also pray for those whose churches are violated. There are Catholics and other Christians throughout the world suffering from attacks while they worship together in their churches. There are many who are victims of those who claim to be acting in the name of God, or in the name of the State, or both, but who in fact are doing the work of the devil. As Church we are one also with these our suffering brothers and sisters.

At its heart, this Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St John Lateran helps us remember that we don't celebrate buildings; we celebrate Church.



**KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE**

**Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow**

**November**

- 16 Mass – Jubilee of Migrants Church of St Anthony, KL
- 18-19 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 20 Focus on the Family Asia Conference
- 21-24 Human Life International Asia Pacific Congress – Sibul

**PENANG DIOCESE**

**Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis**

**November**

- 5-10 Solemn Eucharistic Celebration for the Declaration of the Beatification of Venerable Mother Eliswa – National Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Ransom, Vallarpadam, Kochi, Kerala
- 12 Meeting – Committee of the Great Pilgrimage of Hope, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam at 7.00pm
- 13 Meeting – St Anne Curia, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam at 10.00am
- 15 Healing and Deliverance Weekend Seminar, Church of St Michael, Ipoh at 9.00am
- 15 Confirmation – Church of St Michael, Ipoh at 6.00pm
- 16 Confirmation – Church of St. Anthony, Nibong Tebal at 5.00pm
- 18 Meeting – Council of Priests at Stella Maris, Penang
- 18-19 Clergy Monthly Recollection, Stella Maris, Penang
- 23 Eucharistic Celebration – 100th Anniversary of Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani at 6.00pm

**MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE**

**Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul**

**November**

- 11-13 Annual Clergy Discernment – Good Shepherd Seminary, Melaka
- 15 Confirmation – Church of Christ the King, Kulai
- 19 Diocesan Finance Council meeting – MAJODI Centre
- 21 Opening Mass of Peninsular Malaysia Singapore Chinese Apostolate Commission Seminar – MAJODI Centre
- 22 North-Central Johor Vicariate Eucharistic Congress – Church of St Louis, Kluang



**DIOCESE OF PENANG**  
PKK/BDN/2025/11/220

**Notifications and Updates**

**No one, however weak, is denied a share in the victory of the Cross. No one is beyond the help of the prayer of Christ. St Pope Leo the Great**

**1. Centennial Celebration of the Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani, Kedah**



It is with immense joy and heartfelt gratitude that we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Parish of Christ the King this year. As we recall the founding fathers and mothers and pioneers who worked tirelessly for the past 100 years, let us praise God for the gift of faith that has been passed down from one generation to another.

I greet the current parish priest Fr Victor Louis, and the entire leadership and community of the Church of Christ the King Sungai Petani and the various outstations, to be united and move the mission forward beyond 100 years.

Together with the parish priest and

the parish community of Sungai Petani, I invite all of you for the Eucharistic Celebration of the Feast of Christ the King on Sunday, November 23 at 6.00pm at the Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani, Kedah. <https://bit.ly/4ofcfHZ>

**2. The Great Pilgrimage of Hope 2025 | November 27 - 30, 2025**

‘The Great Pilgrimage of Hope’ is jointly organised by the FABC Office of Evangelisation of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC), in collaboration with the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and the Pontifical Mission Societies, and hosted by the Diocese of Penang. The theme for this historic Congress is “*Journeying together as peoples of Asia... and they went a different way*” (Mt 2:12).

This gathering will bring together cardinals, bishops, priests, religious heads, deacons and people of God from the Asian continent and the Holy See, Rome, journeying together in synodality. This is the second gathering, following the first gathering held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2006.



I invite you to pray for the participants, organisers and all involved in this gathering.

Kindly be informed that on Saturday, November 29 at 6.00pm, there will be a Mass at the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam presided over by His Eminence Tagle Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim, Delegate of Pope Leo XIV, followed by a dinner and concert with Fr Rob Galea. All are welcome to participate at this Mass, dinner and concert.

**3. Chosen Asia Vision Summit | November 30 - December 2, 2025**

The purpose of the Chosen Asia Vision Summit, organised by The Chosen, is to prayerfully and thoughtfully explore how to be meaningfully integrated into Catholic discipleship journeys across Asia. This summit is expected to be a powerful tool in renewing the proclamation of the Gospel and in inviting hearts into a deeper encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Let us pray for the delegates and organisers of this summit who will be from the various countries of Asia as well. May they be enriched through their fruitful encounters with one another.

*Sebastian Francis*

Cardinal Sebastian Francis



**Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #248**



**Welcome to dear friends.**

Trump, Asean Heads of States — Anwar put the nation on the global stage. Hardcore poverty rate has dropped. Timor Leste enters the ASEAN family. Good publicity but the people feel shortchanged, many see betrayal... double standards. Law abiding citizens fume at the discounts given to traffic offenders. Out of 73 returning medical specialists, only three have opted for public health care.

**Local Takes.** Feeling Cheated! \*Putting aside the citizenship issue, the FAM cheats to win. It is no more a story about values, integrity and nation.

The KK High Court ruled that the federal government had unlawfully failed to honour Sabah’s 40 per cent share of net federal revenue from the state over 50 years.

More than 66 per cent of Malaysian students “suffer in silence” with mental health issues.

An MP hits back at Mahathir: Malaysia has always been a multiracial and multicultural nation — belonging to all Malaysians, not to any single race.

The Religious Affairs minister urged for calm; harmony among the *ulamas* and academics for being voices of confusion.

Malaysians make up the highest number of tourists to Thailand.

**Church In The World: Making a Difference:**

Representatives of different faiths gathered with Pope Leo XIV at the Colosseum, to launch a joint appeal urging that no one remain indifferent

before the suffering of “39 million children, elderly people, women and men” who endure conflict and violence.

William Vollman reflects on the woman who poured costly perfumed oil on His head. He added that the woman saw in Jesus the lowly and suffering Messiah on whom she could pour out all her love. What comfort that anointing must have brought to the very head that, within a few days, would be pierced by thorns!

Remember that no sign of affection, even the smallest, will ever be forgotten, especially if it is shown to those who are suffering, lonely or in need, as was the Lord at that time.

The US Bishops pleaded to end the government shutdown as it puts the burden “heavily on the poor and vulnerable of our nation, who are the least able to move forward.”

**A Thought for The Week: Being Better or Bitter?**

Simpson’s wife went to visit one of her long-time friends and was very troubled to see the three lovely kids of her friend playing around.

Her problem was that she had only one child and had been struggling to conceive for the past five years. What she didn’t know was that one of those kids who was the child of her friend had sickle cell disease and had just a year to live; the other two were adopted!

*The lesson from Life:* Life does not have a universal measuring tool; so create yours and use it. Looking at people and comparing yourself with them will not make you better but bitter. Enjoy what you have and be grateful for it.

**QnQ: Q asks: Can an optimist and a pessimist coexist?**

“Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the aeroplane, the pessimist the parachute.” *George Bernard Shaw*

The above captures the balance between vision and caution, between dreaming and grounding. Both tendencies have evolutionary value: one drives innovation; the other ensures survival. The optimist’s brain leans on dopamine - fuelling creativity, hope, and risk-taking. The pessimist’s mind activates the amygdala - scanning for threats and protecting from pain. Both are survival mechanisms, and both are essential for balanced decision-making. The practical take away: When you dream, invite caution to the table. When you worry, ask hope to speak. Balance breeds resilience. (read Matt 10:16)

**The Spirit @ work:** “The Holy Spirit is elegant. He brings peace, not confusion. The Holy Spirit does not make us senseless and silly; He makes us sharp. Though His manifestations might seem strange at times, they are never foolish. His work is purposed for transformation, not entertainment. Those who truly walk as the Spirit leads them, may be peculiar, but they are attractive.”

**Something to tickle you:** “The Sun himself is weak when he first rises, and gathers strength and courage as the day gets on.” (*Charles Dickens*)

*Bernard Paul*

Bishop Bernard Paul

# The heart remembers what the mind forgets

Marilyn Gerard

KUALA LUMPUR: An enlightening session titled *Journeying Through Dementia: Awareness, Care and Caregiver Support* was held on October 18, at Cahayasuara, bringing together 90 participants for an afternoon of learning, empathy, and inspiration. Organised by the Women Ministry's of the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), the session aimed to raise awareness about dementia while empowering caregivers and families to walk this journey with love and understanding.

The session, conducted by Calvin Chong and Jennifer Soh from Managedcare Sdn Bhd, began with a simple yet powerful question: "What does dementia mean to you?" Participants' answers reflected both the pain and perseverance of caring for loved ones living with the condition — stories of fading memories, repeated conversations, and the daily challenges that come with it. For many in the room, dementia was not merely a medical term but a deeply personal reality, filled with moments of both heartbreak and grace.

Calvin explained that there are over 120 types of dementia, each affecting the brain differently. He shared that dementia often begins on the left side of the brain, which

governs language and communication, leading to struggles in expressing thoughts or recognising words. The right side, however, remains active for longer — holding emotional and creative memories. "That's why it's important for dementia patients to keep attending Mass, reading the Bible, or listening to their favourite hymns," Calvin said. "These reach parts of the brain still alive with emotion, comfort, and faith."

The session also offered practical caregiving strategies. Jennifer advised caregivers to adapt communication and mealtime routines to the patient's needs. "When dementia affects vision or memory, show them the food rather than ask what they want to eat," she said. "Let them experience the joy of the meal rather than the pressure of choosing."

One of the session's most touching moments came when Calvin addressed caregiver burnout. "There is no shame in choosing professional care," he reminded. "When caregivers are exhausted, patients suffer too. Sometimes, the most loving act is entrusting them to professionals while continuing to love and visit them." His words drew quiet nods and tears from many present.

Calvin also dispelled the myth that dementia is only an elderly condition, citing the case of a 19-year-old in China diagnosed with probable Alzheimer's disease. "It's a

brain condition that can affect anyone," he said, underscoring the need for early awareness and compassion across all ages.

Throughout the talk, the speakers reinforced one central truth: care must always be rooted in love. "How you care for someone with dementia depends on the relationship you had before the illness," Calvin shared, urging caregivers to approach each moment with patience and tenderness.

The impact of the talk resonated deeply among participants.

- Mercy Almeida, whose mother was recently diagnosed, said, "This talk was heaven-sent. Reading online wasn't enough — this gave us the understanding we desperately needed."

- Melina Fair, a member of the Deaf community, said the session helped her "better support seniors with dementia" and inspired her to share this awareness with others.

- George Adakalassamy Mariasoosay expressed gratitude for the Church's initiative, adding, "My parish priest encouraged me to attend, and it was truly worth it. I hope more parishes host such sessions."

- The Chan family described the event as "a timely reminder that ageing parents are not burdens but blessings," while Mary Lee-Teoh, caring for her husband



Calvin Chong from Managedcare Sdn Bhd giving his presentation.

with early vascular dementia, appreciated AOHD's efforts and called for more church-based support groups for caregivers.

For one participant, the session carried profound personal meaning. Having cared for her mother with vascular dementia for five years, she reflected, "Every day is different. We've learned to step into her world and meet her where she is — with patience, tenderness, and love. Dementia doesn't define a person; their dignity and humanity remain."

The event closed with a moving sense of solidarity. Participants left with new knowledge — and renewed hope. Dementia may take away memories, but it cannot erase love, dignity, or faith.

Through this initiative, the AOHD Women's Ministry reminded all that in the journey through dementia, no one walks alone — for love remembers, even when memory fades.



Participants learning the experience of a person with dementia.



A participant giving her sharing.

## "We are all brothers and sisters": St Mary's Cathedral reflects on *Fratelli Tutti*

SANDAKAN: The sixth Parish Pastoral Assembly of St Mary's Cathedral, held on October 25, placed fraternity and social friendship at the centre of parish reflection and renewal. The one-day assembly, themed around Pope Francis' landmark encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, brought together about 50 delegates from St Mary's Cathedral, St Mark's Church, and St Peter's Chapel to reflect on how the Church can become a true community of brothers and sisters united in love, dialogue, and shared mission.

Organised under the leadership of the Parish Pastoral Council, the one-day assembly was officially opened by Fr David A. Garaman, who reminded participants that *Fratelli Tutti* — inspired by St Francis of Assisi — continues to offer the Church a roadmap for peace, unity, and dialogue.

In his opening address, Fr David shared that *Fratelli Tutti* addresses critical global issues such as social justice, faith, the environment, and peace, while calling all people to reject division, conflict, and indifference. Instead, the encyclical urges the faithful to embrace solidarity, compassion, and cooperation in build-

ing a world rooted in love and mutual respect.

"We are all in the same boat, and no one should walk alone," Fr David said, echoing Pope Francis' invitation to walk together as one human family under God.

Throughout the day, the participants studied the eight chapters of *Fratelli Tutti*, each presented by members of the Parish Pastoral Council. Spiritual Conversations followed, where participants shared their personal experiences — the blessings they find in their com-

munities, the challenges they face, and their hopes for the future of the Church.

Many participants expressed their desire for stronger communication between Church leaders and parishioners, as well as more opportunities for collaboration among the parish communities. They also shared their commitment to carry forward the message of *Fratelli Tutti* in their daily lives by fostering relationships rooted in understanding and care for others.



Fr David Garaman addressing the participants of the Parish Pastoral Assembly.

The assembly concluded with a time of thanksgiving and renewal, as Fr David encouraged delegates to share their learnings with others in their parish communities. He reminded them that the spirit of *Fratelli Tutti* must extend beyond the assembly — becoming a lived reality of fraternity, dialogue, and shared mission.

The parish had previously held three other assemblies to study other key documents of Pope Francis — *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home), and *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) all of which are part of the preparation for the Malaysian Pastoral Convention in Sibul in September 2026.

Together, these encyclicals form a foundation for deepening faith, nurturing community life, and promoting pastoral renewal in the local Church.

As the assembly ended, participants left inspired to live out the vision of *Fratelli Tutti* — to see one another as brothers and sisters, to work for peace and justice, and to be witnesses of hope in a world longing for unity and love.

# Gopeng parish: A community anchored in faith for 106 years

**Bernard Anthony**

**GOPENG:** The Church of St Jude Thaddeus, celebrated its 106th feast from October 23–26, drawing hundreds of faithful under the theme *Anchored in Hope, Guided by St Jude*. The four-day celebration was marked by prayer, reflection, and vibrant community participation, honouring the patron saint of desperate and lost causes.

The triduum began on Oct 23, with Fr Francis Andrew, newly appointed parish priest of the Church of St Joseph, Batu Gajah, and administrator of St Jude, as the main celebrant and preacher. Preaching on the sub-theme *Hope Strengthened by Prayer*, Fr Francis reminded the congregation that prayer is the foundation of faith and the source of Christian hope.

On the following days, Redemptorist priest, Fr Joseph Stephen, CSsR, parish priest of the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh, led the liturgies and preached on *Hope Anchored in God's Promise* (Oct 24) and *Hope Shared in Service* (Oct 25). Around



*Parishioners joining in the procession around the church.*

250 parishioners attended the third day, which included a brief procession in honour of St Jude.

The feast climaxed on Sunday, Oct 26, with the Novena, Rosary, and Mass celebrated outdoors under tents to accommodate the large crowd of over 800 pilgrims from near and far. Fr Francis presided and preached the homily, welcoming all with the words, "You have come here with a purpose — to seek the intercession of St Jude and to ask God to grant your prayers. Ask God what your voca-

tion in life is."

During the Gloria, Fr Francis blessed the congregation with holy water, symbolising renewal and grace. In his homily, he reflected on the call to holiness and humility, reminding the faithful that "we all come here because we want to go to heaven. Jesus has shown us the way — it is now up to us to follow." He urged the community to emulate Christ's humility, saying, "Jesus came to wash our feet; let us do likewise within our families and to our neighbours."

Fr Francis also called on parishioners to reach out to the marginalised, the lonely, and the sick, noting the growing despair in today's society. "We ask St Jude to intercede for us — but do we truly know him? Let us learn from his humility, service, prayer, perseverance, hope, and unshakeable faith in God," he said.

Following the Mass, a procession took place around the church grounds, with the statue of St Jude carried on a hand-held carriage. Fr Francis led the procession with

the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, as the faithful recited the Rosary. The solemn walk concluded with Benediction.

Afterwards, Parish Pastoral Council chairperson Andrew Gynapiragasam expressed thanks to all who made the feast possible — the clergy, committees, sponsors, and volunteers — and praised the unity and dedication shown by the community.

Fr Francis, in his closing remarks, extended gratitude to the feast day committee, liturgical team, and sponsors, acknowledging their efforts in making the celebration meaningful and spiritually enriching. Though newly assigned to the parish, he expressed his hope to "promote and expand next year's feast to an even greater scale."

The celebration concluded with a communal lunch.

On Oct 28, the actual feast day of St Jude, Fr Francis celebrated an evening Mass attended by nearly 100 parishioners — a fitting conclusion to a week filled with faith, hope, and thanksgiving.

## Feast of St Jude unites pilgrims with hope

**RAWANG:** The parish of St Jude Thaddeus concluded its nine-day novena and feast celebration on October 18, drawing thousands of pilgrims in a display of faith, devotion, and community spirit.

Themed *Celebrating, Listening and Walking as Pilgrims of Hope*, the event reaffirmed the parish's reputation as a major pilgrimage destination, attracting visitors from across Malaysia and even Singapore.

The celebration began on Oct 16 with the raising of the parish flag, marking the start of the novena. Each day featured a unique sub-theme and was led by guest priests from both the northern and southern regions.

The parish's zones and BECs

animated the Masses and hosted simple yet meaningful gatherings. Many parishioners highlighted the warm presence of the clergy mingling freely with the people, sharing meals and conversations that deepened the sense of community.

Adding colour and charm to the festivities were the stalls set up by various parish groups. The Chinese community drew admiration for their exquisite flower bouquets, while handcrafted rosaries made from precious stones and commemorative tote bags bearing the saint's emblem became keepsakes for pilgrims.

The celebration reached its pinnacle on Saturday evening with the candlelight procession.



*Fr Simon Labrooy*

The statue of St Jude, patron of impossible causes, was carried on a beautifully adorned Hilux, making its journey through the streets of Rawang. Police assistance ensured the smooth flow of traffic as thousands joined in prayer and song, their candles illuminating the night. People from all walks of life stood along the streets, moved by the faith and reverence of the occasion.

The nine days of prayer concluded with the traditional burning of petitions and Mass intentions, as smoke carrying prayers, gratitude, and trust rose heavenward. The moment captured the essence of the feast — a renewal of faith and hope in God's mercy.

As the final hymns faded into the night, the faithful departed with hearts full of peace and anticipation, already looking forward to next year's celebration of the saint who continues to inspire hope amid life's impossibilities. **Mercy Almeida Stellus**

## Migrants and refugees feted at OLL, Klang

**KLANG:** Migrants and refugees were honoured for their faith, culture, and contributions on Sunday, October 26, at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL), which joyfully celebrated the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR).

As Scripture reminds us, "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself. *Leviticus 19:34*

Pope Leo XIV reminds us that migrants and refugees are not just recipients of mercy but "missionaries of hope." Their journeys speak of faith, courage, and resilience — a sign of hope that points to God's love and care. The Holy Father calls all believers to welcome them as brothers and sisters and to build communities of compassion, hospitality, and solidarity.

Communities from India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Africa, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Vietnam came together in colourful attire and joyful spirit. The celebration began with three Eucharistic celebrations — English at 8.00am (African,

Myanmar, and Filipino), Tamil at 10.00am (Indian and Sri Lankan), and BM at 1230pm (Indonesian). Each Mass was animated by the communities, who participated in the readings, offertory, hospitality ministry, and flag processions, enriching the liturgy with their cultural expressions.

After the Mass in BM, everyone gathered at Wisma Lourdes for fellowship. Fr Selva, who officiated the celebration, reminded the faithful that the Church must always be a welcoming home for all. He encouraged everyone to see Christ in every migrant and refugee, to build bridges of friendship and to live out the Gospel through kindness and inclusion.

Each community served their traditional dishes, creating a joyful atmosphere filled with laughter, friendship, and gratitude. The day concluded with vibrant cultural performances showcasing traditional dances and songs — a true celebration of unity in diversity and our shared identity as one family of God. **Nesa Dhevasahayam**



*Pilgrims walking in a candlelight procession.*



*Filipino community performing during the lunch.*

# Church, professionals unite to promote mental well-being

SHAH ALAM: The Church of Divine Mercy hosted a mental health awareness event on October 11, aimed at fostering community support and improving access to services during times of crisis and emergency.

Organised by the Archdiocesan Mental Health Ministry (AMHM) in collaboration with HELP University, the event brought together Church leaders, mental health professionals, and parishioners for a day of learning, reflection, and dialogue under the theme *Community: Supporting Mental Wellbeing Together*.

The programme emphasised recognising mental health as part of holistic well-being, particularly in the wake of recent natural disasters that have affected many communities. Through talks, workshops, and interactive booths, participants explored how emotional support can be extended not only through professional services but also through daily acts of compassion within the community.

The event began with a prayer led by Archbishop Julian Leow, who reminded participants that “mental health is not an isolated issue but part of how we live, relate, and care for one another.” His message invited all to view mental well-being as a shared responsibility rather than a private struggle.

Archbishop Julian was joined by Fr Philip Chua, ecclesiastical assistant of the AMHM, and Dr Gerard Louis, president of HELP Education Group, underscoring close col-



Panelists discussing practical ways to support one another.

laboration between faith communities and mental health professionals.

Acknowledging the emotional aftermath of recent floods and tremors across the peninsula, speakers noted that while physical rebuilding often begins quickly, emotional healing takes time. “Homes can be rebuilt, but peace of mind takes longer to restore,” one speaker said, urging communities to respond with understanding and compassion.

Clinical psychologist Kelly Phang led the first session, addressing common misconceptions about mental health. She reminded participants that mental well-being encompasses daily experiences of stress, loss, and fatigue, not just diagnosed conditions. She emphasised that care often begins with simple acts of listening without judgment — a message that deeply resonated with the audience.

Subsequent workshops explored mental

health in specific contexts — youth, family, and working adults.

- Jeremiah Liew, counsellor and lecturer at HELP University, discussed self-resilience and identity among youth, joined by Luisa Margareta G, a Master of Counselling intern, who delivered the session in Malay to promote inclusivity.

- Esther Chu, Head of the Centre for Psychological and Counselling Services at HELP University, addressed family mental health, while Julianna Tang, trainee counsellor and play therapist, conducted a Mandarin session on parent-child communication.

- For working adults, Dr Victor Goh, senior lecturer and acting dean at HELP University’s Faculty of Psychology, spoke on *Finding Purpose at Work and in Life*.

Alongside the workshops, participants visited an art exhibition and experiential

booths offering hands-on and reflective activities. The exhibition featured artworks depicting personal journeys with mental health, complemented by written reflections. At the art therapy booth, Art psychotherapist Reena Clare facilitated a creative sponge-stamping activity designed to encourage self-expression rather than perfection. Other booths provided psychometric assessments and body postural screenings to help participants understand their well-being better.

The day concluded with a community sharing session, where panelists discussed practical ways to support one another. “Many people struggle silently, as mental health issues are often invisible,” one panelist remarked. “It is crucial that we remain compassionate and reach out.”

Panelists also encouraged youth to seek professional help instead of relying solely on artificial intelligence or online tools for mental health support.

In his closing remarks and blessing, Fr Philip Chua thanked all organisers, volunteers, and participants for their dedication and service.

The event offered more than just information — it created a safe space for conversation, understanding, and hope. By bringing together faith and professional expertise, the Church of Divine Mercy took another step toward normalising discussions on mental health and strengthening the Church’s role as a community of care and compassion.



## WE ARE HIRING

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP) Selangor, manages several homes providing care, education, and a nurturing environment for children from underprivileged backgrounds, as well as Service Centres that offer assistance such as food aid, financial help, educational support, and counselling to struggling families and individuals.

We are looking for compassionate and committed individuals to join our team in serving the community.

### Administrative Assistants

#### Responsibilities:

- Handle general office administration and documentation
- Assist with correspondence, record keeping, and reports
- Support fundraising activities and event coordination
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#### Requirements:

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- Good communication and computer skills
- Responsible, organised, and able to work independently

### Caregivers

#### Responsibilities:

- Provide daily care and supervision for children in the home
- Support the emotional and social development of each child
- Manage household routines such as meals, hygiene, and chores
- Ensure a clean, organised, and welcoming living environment
- Work closely with other staff and committee members to support each child’s growth and development

#### Requirements:

- A heart for children and a genuine passion for caregiving
- Prior experience in childcare or similar roles is preferred
- Patient, nurturing, and emotionally resilient
- Able to maintain structure, discipline, and warmth
- Basic literacy, good communication skills, proficient in English and Bahasa Malaysia
- Willing to stay in the home or work shifts (including weekends and public holidays when required)

#### To Apply:

Please email your résumé to [md7178@gmail.com](mailto:md7178@gmail.com) or WhatsApp 012-3250974

## Silver Liners enjoy outing to Putrajaya

CHERAS: The Silver Liners Ministry (SLM) of the Church of St Francis of Assisi organised an outing for the elderly on October 23. The group, accompanied by parish priest, Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap, enjoyed a sightseeing cruise in Putrajaya, followed by a buffet lunch at the Everly Hotel and a scenic city tour.

The outing coincided with Fr Paul’s 71st birthday. Before lunch, the group surprised him with a birthday cake and song, thanking God for his dedicated pastoral care and praying for his continued good health.

The 45-minute cruise provided the elderly with a relaxing and refreshing experience as they admired the beautiful architecture and landscape of Putrajaya. Many described the gentle breeze and lake view as “soothing and rejuvenating.”

The bus tour offered close-up views of the government buildings and the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, allowing

participants to appreciate the city’s unique design and tranquil atmosphere.

For many, it was a chance to rediscover Putrajaya in a leisurely and meaningful way. “Though we’ve been here before, this was different — peaceful, well-paced, and full of laughter,” shared one participant. After lunch, the group took a short walk to Alamanda Mall, where some explored the shops for the first time.

The Silver Liners Ministry continues to create opportunities for the elderly to connect spiritually and socially. Following each outing, the ministry holds a “potbless” gathering to foster fellowship and sharing within the community. Their next potbless will take place on November 30 at the Church of St Francis of Assisi.

Earlier in August, as part of the Jubilee Year 2025 celebrations, SLM also organised a pilgrimage to Kuching for 70 senior members including Fr Paul. **Consuela Foong**



# South Johor Vicariate unites in faith at Eucharistic Congress

Vincent D'Silva

PLENTONG: On October 25, throngs of faithful filled the grounds of Majodi Centre for the South Johor Vicariate's Eucharistic Congress — a day steeped in prayer, reflection, and unity.

The gathering began in Majodi Hall, where voices rose in worship and hearts knelt in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. The atmosphere set the tone for a day centred on encountering Christ's real presence.

Soon after, the crowd dispersed into four language groups for their sessions.

In his talk to the English-speaking group, Fr Stanley Antoni reflected on the theme *Together, Togetherness and To Gather*, inviting all to rediscover the meaning of communion — not only in the breaking of bread, but in the breaking open of hearts. "The Eucharist," he said, "is what binds us — a divine act of gathering, where love becomes mission."

Fr Stanley offered a framework of act, fact, and effect to help the faithful grasp the mystery of the Eucharist. The act, he explained, is the ritual expression of faith; the fact is God's saving reality at work; and the effect is the grace that transforms believers. "The Eucharist is not just a ritual," he reminded, "but a living encounter that unites us to Christ's holiness."

He emphasised that every Eucharistic

celebration proclaims the threefold mystery — Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again — which must be lived out with sorrow for sin, joy in the resurrection, and awe before His coming.

Delving deeper, Fr Stanley said that true holiness "separates in order to unite," warning against pride and exclusivity. "We are called not to set ourselves apart in superiority," he cautioned, "but to bridge divides and draw others to God's love."

He also outlined five dimensions of conversion — intellectual, emotional, moral, religious, and social — inviting the faithful to humility in knowledge, honesty in emotion, integrity in action, authenticity in faith, and compassion in community.

Fr Stanley did not shy away from addressing hard truths, speaking candidly about inclusivity and racism within church life. "Communion is not mere harmony," he said. "It is solidarity — seeing the other as another self." Gratitude, he added, is the crowning expression of faith. "If your only prayer is 'Thank you,' it is enough. Gratitude is the language of those who recognise everything as gift."

In his subsequent reflection, Fr Stanley invited listeners to ponder the reality of Christ's presence in the consecrated host. "The priest prays on behalf of the community, and after that prayer, Jesus becomes truly present. That is the fact of faith," he said.



Fr Dr Lawrence Ng lifts the Blessed Sacrament during the Eucharistic Adoration.

He explored the five dimensions of reality — physical, functional, relational, absolute, and existential — challenging believers to live as if Christ in the Eucharist were as real as everything they see, love, and depend upon.

Drawing from the evangelical counsels of obedience, chastity, and poverty, he said these virtues are not rules but responses to the living Christ: "Obedience is the pursuit of truth, chastity is the expression of authentic love, and poverty is trust that God will provide."

He urged the faithful to live with integrity and moral courage, warning against gossip, hypocrisy, and propaganda. "If Jesus is real and true, why do we still prefer darkness to light?" he asked.

Fr Stanley closed with a challenge: "If we truly believe that Jesus is real in the Eucharist, our lives must mirror that reality — in truth, in love, and in trust."

During the Liturgy of the Word, Fr Stanley's homily deepened this call to Eucharistic living. "All that is good

culminates by breaking itself," he said. "That is the mark of ultimate goodness — to break open so that goodness may continue." Using vivid imagery from nature and Scripture, he reminded the faithful that life is renewed only through self-giving: "Taking and blessing are easy. But to break and to give — that takes maturity in faith."

He urged Catholics to "break" themselves for others — through service, generosity, and time. "Only mature Catholics break, only mature Catholics share," he said. "When we do, our parishes come alive."

Confessions were heard throughout the day, while many pilgrims visited the Blessed Carlo Acutis Eucharistic Exhibition at the Malacca Johore Diocese Centre for History and Heritage.

The day concluded with the solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Bishop Bernard Paul and concelebrated by diocesan clergy — a luminous expression of unity and grace that bound hearts together in the mystery of Christ's abiding presence.



Fr Stanley Antoni celebrating Mass.



Pilgrims walking through the History and Heritage at the Malacca Johore Diocese Centre.

JOHOR BAHRU: The Triumph Heart of Mary (THM) community organised a solemn Jericho Walk at the MAJODI Centre on October 20, drawing about 45 participants from across the diocese. The prayer walk began at 4.30pm and was led by Bishop Bernard Paul, who opened the evening with Psalm 51 for repentance and Psalm 91 for God's protection.

This walk was requested by Bishop Bernard as part of the spiritual preparation for the South Johor Vicariate's Eucharistic Congress, scheduled for October 25.

Inspired by the Old Testament account in the Book of Joshua, the Jericho Walk recalls how the Israelites, through faith and obedience, circled the walls of Jericho for seven days until the walls came tumbling down. Similarly, this walk served as a prayerful act of intercession, to tear down all obstacles, whether human, spiritual, or environmental, that might hinder the success

## Jericho Walk unites the faithful in prayer

of the Eucharistic Congress. Participants also prayed for protection over all attendees, the MAJODI Centre, and the entire programme.

The group, comprising Bishop Bernard, members of the THM community, and parishioners from various parishes, completed seven rounds of the designated route while praying the Rosary. The event embodied the spirit of synodality — listening, participation, dialogue, discernment, and walking together — as participants reflected on the promptings of the Holy Spirit and shared insights that deepened their faith and unity.

Though the skies were cloudy, the weather remained calm throughout, an answered prayer for many. The walk lasted for two and a half hours, concluding with a time of joyful praise and worship in both English and Chinese, echoing the biblical moment when

the Israelites ended their march with loud praise and music.

The Jericho Walk at MAJODI Centre was a spiritual declaration of faith and unity, strengthening all who participated and

affirming trust in God's providence. Just as the walls of Jericho once fell, the faithful believe that every obstacle to the Eucharistic Congress would also crumble before the power of His grace.



The participants during the Jericho Walk at Majodi Centre.

# Faith and nature unite at SFA Cheras Eco Fair

CHERAS: An Eco Fair was held at the Church of St Francis of Assisi (SFA) which brought together parishioners, families, and the wider community in a vibrant celebration of faith, nature, and stewardship.

Inspired by St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, the event served as a reminder of the Christian call to care for God's creation and live in harmony with the environment.

The day was filled with engaging activities and meaningful encounters. The Eco Market featured stalls offering eco-friendly products, handmade crafts, organic food, and upcycled creations — encouraging visitors to make simple, sustainable choices in daily life. Each stall reflected the fair's central message: that caring for the Earth begins with conscious, loving action.

Adding to the excitement was a colourful Food and Beverages section, which showcased Malaysia's cultural diversity. Visitors enjoyed yam cake, *penyaram*, *kelupis pulut*, *ayam rendang*, *rojak*, and *cendol*, along with an on-the-spot *thosai*-making station serving *thosai* with *masala* tea and coffee. The aroma and flavours fostered a spirit of fellowship and joyful

sharing among all who attended.

A highlight of the fair was the wildlife exhibition, which offered an insightful look into Malaysia's natural heritage. Informative displays helped visitors appreciate the nation's rich biodiversity and the importance of protecting endangered species that share our common home.

To promote responsible waste management, parishioners were encouraged to bring e-waste, expired medicine, and old religious

items for proper recycling and disposal — a practical step towards reducing pollution and caring for the environment in everyday life.

The day also featured two educational sessions — an eco talk and a solar talk — aimed at inspiring parishioners to adopt greener lifestyles. The talks provided valuable insights into renewable energy, waste reduction, and sustainable living, empowering families to take concrete steps in caring

for the Earth.

The tree planting ceremony symbolised the parish's living commitment to nurture and protect creation. The act of planting new life served as a powerful reminder that environmental stewardship begins with each of us and continues through future generations.

Participants of all ages joined canvas bag drawing and stone painting sessions, expressing their love for creation through art. Children under 12 took part in specially designed games that taught recycling, conservation, and the joy of protecting nature while having fun with friends and family.

The St Francis of Assisi Eco Fair beautifully united faith, creativity, and community action. It reminded all that ecological conversion begins with gratitude and the recognition of the Earth as God's precious gift.

The day's joyful energy reflected a shared commitment to live out the late Pope Francis' call in *Laudato Si'* to "care for our common home" with love, simplicity, and hope for the future.

The event was organised by the Creation Justice Ministry whose dedicated efforts made the celebration of creation both inspiring and impactful. **Shivonne Prevena**



Visitors patronising the exhibition booths.

## AMNEC's evangelisation journey in the Philippines

CHERAS: Five members from the Archdiocesan Mission of New Evangelisation for Christ (AMNEC) were in Manila, Philippines, from October 8 to 14 to participate in a conference and training programme with the Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) Movement from Canada.

The programme was led by CCO founders, Andre and Angele Regnier, and Benjamin Turland, head of the Parish Support Team. For nearly four decades, CCO has been at the forefront of inspiring Catholics around the world to rediscover the joy of missionary discipleship and to share the Gospel with renewed zeal.

The AMNEC participants learned that evangelisation need not be complex — it begins with a genuine relationship with Jesus and a life rooted in prayer. Central to the formation was the use of *The Ultimate Relationship* booklet, a simple yet powerful tool that helps others encounter Christ personally and place Him at the centre of their lives.

Beyond the classroom sessions, the Malaysian delegates were invited to experience missionary life firsthand. They visited *Fondacio*, a Christian community that nurtures leadership, faith, and social responsibility among young people. The

encounter inspired a vision for future collaborations to offer Malaysian youth similar experiences of faith, community life, and service through social and environmental projects.

A particularly moving experience was the visit to the Missionary Community of St Paul the Apostle (MCSPA), led by Malaysian missionary Fr Francis Teo. The community serves the poorest of the poor in the slum areas of Manila, promoting the integral development of the human person. The AMNEC team joined the missionaries in their outreach visits, witnessing the face of Christ among those who suffer silently and finding renewed meaning in the call to "go forth and make disciples."

During their visit, they also met Bro Patrick Groom from Malawi and Bro Joel Jeremiah, an 18-year-old from Johor, Malaysia, who have both responded to the call to become full-time missionaries with MCSPA. Their witness of faith and service was a powerful reminder that God continues to raise missionaries from every corner of the world.

Upon returning home, the mission culminated in a commissioning and certification ceremony on Oct 18 at the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras. **Shivonne Prevena**



## Forty-one commissioned as missionary disciples on World Mission Day

CHERAS: On World Mission Sunday, October 19, forty-one faithful, from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur were commissioned as missionary disciples at the Church of St Francis of Assisi.

The commissioning marked the culmination of formation through the CCO Faith Series, facilitated by the Archdiocesan Mission of New Evangelisation for Christ (AMNEC) in collaboration with Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) Canada.

A day earlier, on October 18, participants attended a formation session led by CCO founders Andre and Angele Regnier, and Benjamin Turland, head of the parish support team. The session focused on *Intentional Accompaniment: Holiness and Mission*, emphasising how missionary discipleship involves seeing and seizing opportunities to share Christ's love and being empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear fruit for God's glory.

AMNEC team members, who had previously undergone the Faith Series in Manila guided this first cohort of participants from six parishes in the Archdiocese under a pilot project endorsed by Archbishop Julian Leow.

The CCO Faith Series is based on five key aspects of forming missionary disciples — Encounter with Jesus Christ, Conversion, Discipleship, Communion, and Mission. This formation equips participants to live out their baptismal call to holiness and evangelisation by leading others to a personal relationship with Christ.

Each commissioned disciple will now go on to lead small groups of six to eight participants in their parishes, BECs, families, or workplaces through *Discovery*, the first of the Faith Series books. Over six weeks, *Discovery* invites participants to reflect deeply on their faith and make a personal decision — whether for the first time or as a renewal — to place Jesus at the centre of their lives.

Subsequent stages of the Faith Series — Source, Growth, Trust, and Commission — build upon this foundation. Source helps participants recognise the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification and empowerment; Growth focuses on living out the Christian life through prayer, Scripture, sacraments, fellowship, service, and witness; Trust deepens reliance on God in every circumstance; and Commission explores the Church's missionary identity, offering practical insights into evangelisation and discipleship drawn from CCO's 37 years of missionary experience.

AMNEC remains committed to the principle of "spiritual multiplication," focusing not on numbers but on forming individuals who, in turn, will accompany and form others. As the team often says, the goal is to "reach the world, one person at a time."

Those interested in learning more about becoming a Missionary Disciple may contact Andrew Lim (012-3173677) or Brian de Rozario (012-2584622) for further information. **Andrew and Veronica Lim**



AMNEC Team with CCO Founders and members.

# Filipino cardinal sees 'new People Power' in citizens' push for transparency, accountability

MANILA: Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan said the spirit of People Power is taking new form — no longer confined to street protests but alive in citizens' vigilance, truth-telling, and public participation.

In a reflection titled *People Power Reborn* posted on his Facebook account, the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said the "new People Power is not only about massive rallies — though those will always have their place — but about sustained participation, informed vigilance, and creative collaboration."

"It is about ordinary citizens using extraordinary means — research, digital platforms, and public engagement — to disinfect the wounds of a system infected by greed and impunity," he wrote.

Cardinal David said today's People Power "no longer shouts from the streets alone; it now reasons in public forums, collaborates across generations, and acts in the name of the common good."

He described the country as "witnessing the slow emergence of what may be called the civic antibodies of our democracy" — citizens who guard public interest through truth and transparency.

"These are the young professionals and volunteers who spend sleepless nights poring over spreadsheets, pro-



Filipino cardinal Pablo Virgilio Siongco David at Mass with the new cardinals at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, on December 8, 2024.

curement reports, and budget annexes; the local leaders who organize communities to demand transparency; the teachers and journalists who help the public understand how corruption eats away at the common good," he wrote.

The reflection followed the Senate Committee on Finance hearing led by Senator Win Gatchalian, where young reform advocates AJ Montesa and Ken Abante testified on behalf of the Roundtable Forum for Integral Development and the Philippine Budget Watch community.

"I found myself listening with both admiration and quiet awe as these two young Filipinos articulated what many of us have long felt in our hearts but could not express as clearly or courageously," said the prelate. "It was not

just another budget hearing; it was a moral moment."

Their analogy, he noted, was "unforgettable: our nation as a body afflicted with malignant cancer." They identified the "tumors" as "soft and hard pork," the bloated, secretly inserted, patronage-driven budgets disguised as programmed and unprogrammed appropriations."

"What struck me even more," he added, "was the way they described civil society as the body's immune system."

"If AJ Montesa and Ken Abante are any indication, the antibodies are awakening. And perhaps, after all these years, the patient — the Filipino nation — still has the strength to heal," the prelate said. **LiCAS News**

## Timor Leste celebrates ASEAN membership with hope and faith

DILI: Timor Leste's long-awaited entry into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been met with joy, pride, and hope, especially among the nation's youth. "There is great expectation and hope, as young people see accession as the opening of new opportunities for work and the future," said Fr Bento Pereira, spokesperson for the Episcopal Conference of East Timor and National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

After more than 20 years of anticipation, East Timor officially became

ASEAN's eleventh member at the Kuala Lumpur Summit on October 26. The move is seen as a milestone for the small Catholic-majority nation of 1.3 million people, providing access to a regional economic community of about 680 million.

Fr. Pereira said ASEAN membership offers prospects for growth and cooperation. "This is a very positive step for our young Republic. We also want to contribute — not just receive — by sharing our culture, resources, and strong faith," he said. He noted

that while emigration may increase due to unemployment, it could also lead to skill development as young people study and work abroad before returning home.

Faith remains central to Timorese identity, he added. "Wherever they go, Timorese bring their faith with them. Even abroad, they remain witnesses of the Gospel," said Fr Pereira, noting that priests are sent to serve Timorese communities overseas in countries such as Australia and South Korea.

Cardinal Virgilio do Carmo da Silva, Archbishop of Dili, also hailed ASEAN membership as a proud achievement but urged caution and commitment. "This step does not automatically bring prosperity. We must stay vigilant and invest in our capabilities, especially education, which is key to progress," he said.

Analysts highlight that integration will require adopting ASEAN free trade policies, which could expose East Timor's small \$2 billion (RM 8.4 billion) economy to regional competition. Yet, for many, ASEAN membership represents a vital step toward economic growth, regional cooperation, and a brighter future grounded in faith and resilience. **Fides**



Timor-Leste's Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao (second left) shakes hands with Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (second right)

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Beijing priests run "Synodal Half Marathon" to promote health and unity

BEIJING: In a display of both faith and fellowship, Catholic clergy in Beijing took part in the first "Pegaso – Synodal Half Marathon" on October 25. The event, sponsored by Bishop Joseph Li Shan and organized by Auxiliary Bishop Matthew Zhen Xuebin, a marathon enthusiast, aimed to promote physical and mental well-being among priests while strengthening unity within the clergy.

About thirty priests, including a bishop, ran the 21-kilometre route along the Wenyu River in Beijing's Shunyi District. The event highlighted values of participation, health, and fraternity rather than competition, though the fastest runner fin-

ished in 1 hour, 37 minutes, and 58 seconds.

The race concluded a five-day spiritual retreat (Oct 20–25) themed *Observing the Precepts and Cultivating Inner Growth*. During the retreat, Bishop Li Shan reminded priests of their duty to live faithfully according to Church precepts and maintain integrity in their vocation. Bishop Zhen Xuebin urged simplicity and discipline, while Fr Joseph Wu Qinjing encouraged holiness and renewed pastoral zeal.

The marathon, blending spiritual reflection with physical endurance, embodied the synodal spirit — walking, and even running, together in faith and service. **Agenzia Fides**

#### Syrian archbishop warns: "The Church in Syria is dying"

HOMS, Syria: Syriac Catholic Archbishop Jacques Mourad of Homs has warned that "the Church in Syria is dying," as the Christian population continues to fall drastically — from 2.1 million in 2011 to around 540,000 in 2024, according to Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

Speaking at the launch of ACN's Religious Freedom in the World 2025 report in Rome, Archbishop Mourad said Syria's "disastrous political and economic situation" has triggered a mass exodus that the Church cannot stop. "You can't halt migration without first establishing a stable government and solid security system," he said.

He warned that Syria is "becoming more like Afghanistan," with continuing violence, fear, and

repression. "Don't think we are heading towards greater freedom — religious or otherwise," he added.

The archbishop also voiced concern over a possible peace treaty with Israel that could cede the Golan Heights, saying it would "deprive the inhabitants of Damascus of water sources." He urged the international community to take a clear stand on Syria and support efforts to rebuild justice and confidence.

At the report launch, ACN also announced a global petition defending Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees religious freedom.

Kidnapped by ISIS in 2015 and later rescued by Muslims, Archbishop Mourad now works to promote fraternity between Christians and Muslims. **ICN**

#### US Bishops urge action to prevent SNAP food aid disruption

WASHINGTON: Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, has called on lawmakers to urgently fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme (SNAP) to prevent millions from losing food aid amid the ongoing government shutdown.

The Trump administration announced that SNAP benefits, which support over 40 million Americans, would stop on November 1 if the shutdown continues. Nearly 80 per cent of recipient households include children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

Archbishop Broglio warned that halting the programme would be "catastrophic" for vulnerable families and "unjust

and unacceptable." He urged bipartisan cooperation to restore government funding and protect essential social programmes.

The US Department of Agriculture said it lacks the \$9.2 billion (RM38.6 billion) needed to fund SNAP, while political leaders exchanged blame over the stalemate. A coalition of 25 states and Washington, DC, has filed a lawsuit to keep the programme running.

"The bishops have consistently supported policies that help those in need," Archbishop Broglio said. "I urgently plead with lawmakers and the Administration to ensure these lifesaving programmes are funded." **ICN**

# Synodality in Asia: Impact and challenges

The praxis of synodality, walking together as a Church in communion, participation, and mission, has found fertile ground in Asia, a continent marked by religious pluralism, cultural diversity, and complex socio-political realities. While the Synod on Synodality has global significance, its impact in Asia is particularly profound due to the region's unique ecclesial and societal contexts.

We present briefly six key points on the positive impact of synodality in Asia and equally six points underlining the challenges for synodality in Asia. These are no means exhaustive but indicative of the synodal pathway thus far.

## Positive impact of synodality in Asia

### 1. Renewed Emphasis on Dialogue

In Asia, a region where Christians are often minorities, synodality has deepened the Church's commitment to interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Dialogue is not optional but essential for peaceful coexistence. The synodal process has encouraged local Churches to engage more deeply with their neighbours, fostering mutual understanding and harmony.

### 2. Empowerment of the Laity

Synodality has elevated the role of laypeople, especially women and youth, in Church leadership and decision-making. By affirming baptismal dignity and charisms, it promotes inclusive participation at all levels of ecclesial life.

### 3. Strengthening Local Churches

The synodal journey has encouraged local Churches to articulate their unique challenges and experiences, leading to more contextualised theology and pastoral approaches rooted in the lived realities of Asian communities.

### 4. Spiritual Renewal

Listening and discernment have sparked spiritual awakenings in many dioceses. Basic Christian Communities are embracing a spirit-



*Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, representing the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and serving on the Commission for Synodality, presented the Asia Synodal Journey Report at the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies: Encounter Dialogue with Pope Leo XIV on October 24, 2025. Speaking on behalf of the Church in Asia, Fr Clarence highlighted how communities across the continent — diverse in culture, language, and faith traditions — have responded to the call to journey together through listening, dialogue, and discernment. We present his report here in full.*



*Pope Leo XIV, with regional representatives of synod teams, listens to and answers questions from participants in the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies in the Vatican audience hall October 24, 2025. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)*

uality of communion, transforming into Basic Human and Ecological Communities. Positive feedback from Conversations in the Spirit continues to emerge during this implementation phase.

### 5. Digital Engagement

Digital platforms have become vital tools for consultation, catechesis, and community building, especially among youth. These technologies enable broader participation and amplify voices from diverse contexts.

### 6. Walking together as the Church in Asia:

The synodal process has unfolded alongside the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) 50th anniversary, strengthening continental bonds and inspiring deeper collaboration across Asia.

## Challenges for synodality in Asia

### 1. Conceptual Ambiguity

The term "synodality" remains difficult to

translate and communicate across Asia's diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes, leading at times to confusion and uneven understanding.

### 2. Clericalism and Resistance to Change

Some clergy perceive synodality as a threat to traditional authority, creating resistance that hinders effective implementation and inclusive participation.

### 3. Formation and Capacity Building

There is a pressing need for trained facilitators and broader formation among clergy, religious, and laity. Without this, synodal engagement risks being superficial or misunderstood.

### 4. Minority Status and Political Pressures

In areas facing religious extremism or political constraints across Asia, public expressions of synodality are limited, affecting the Church's ability to fully live out its mission.

### 5. Structural Limitations

Many dioceses lack the infrastructure to sustain synodal practices. Embedding synodality into parish life requires structural renewal and a shift in mindset toward participatory leadership.

### 6. Inequality

Economic and technological divides risk excluding the poor and marginalised. Some synod reports reveal that these groups feel the Church is not walking closely enough with them.

## Synodal experiences from the implementation phase

Among some key initiatives taken during this implementation phase to overcome the challenges are as follows:

### 1. Long-term Pastoral Planning

Dioceses are developing long-term pastoral roadmaps inspired by synodal principles. Examples include India's Mission 2033 and Pilgrims of Hope, Thailand's national framework, and the Philippines' Synodal Implementation Framework, all reflecting strategic clarity and shared mission.

### 2. Engaging Key Stakeholders

Key gatherings with seminary rectors (Bangkok, April 2025), religious formators (Kuala Lumpur, August 2025), and youth ministers (Vietnam, September 2025) show a commitment to deepening formation and cultivating leadership that embodies synodality.

In conclusion, synodality in Asia is both a gift and a task. It offers a transformative vision for the Church, rooted in communion and mission, while also demanding courage, creativity, and commitment to overcome deep-seated challenges. As Asian churches continue this journey, their experiences will enrich the global Church's understanding of what it truly means to walk together in faith.



## Fr Clarence's question to Pope Leo



**Fr Dr Clarence Devadass:**  
Holy Father, what message would you like to share with the churches in Asia to encourage synodal conversion?

**Pope Leo:** The first thing that comes to mind, is that I would like to say thank you to the Church in Asia. If anyone would have a challenge because of language, cultural differences and geographical distance, poverty and many

other realities that you face, it is you.

To have worked as hard as you have and come to where you are today in living this process not only of synodality but promoting communion and conversion, I think we all should say thank you and congratulations to you.

Dialogue you said is essential for peaceful coexistence. And I think because of the many inter-religious realities which are so widespread, Christianity being a minority in Asia and has had to face the challenges that come along in terms of living the faith and being disciples of Jesus Christ, including in places where there is oppression and where it is difficult to live the faith.

I think there are many things that all of us need to bow down to and to respect the holy ground that Asia is for us, the present and future of the Church.

There is a sense of mystery and understanding of the divine which I think is part of many of the religions in Asia that opens the doors

to different kinds of inter-religious dialogues. And I think this is a treasure for the whole Church, eastern and western. I also believe it is something that is valued by so many cultures in Asia that we also could learn from.

And because of that, when we talk about the spirit of synodality and Conversations in the Spirit, a mystical or contemplative element to that, perhaps we could continue to discover and I won't say understand, as it goes far beyond understanding but contact with the divine is what we can all learn from in Asia.

There are of course great challenges. The structural, economic realities that you deal with and the difficulty of even promoting communications on a widespread level because of the limitation of the local Churches, are realities that we too need to share.

I think that this kind of experience of a synodal Church, of building communion, needs to inspire in all of us, if you will, a greater generosity in sharing of resources so that we can have perhaps greater equality, greater justice



even in terms of the goods and blessings that many churches could share with others.

Obviously, there are great challenges in doing that, there are great efforts being made, and that should be recognised, that it's an ongoing process.

But I think again the people of Asia can offer much hope. And I hope that all of us together can be a hope for the Church in Asia. With that I simply express gratitude and great reverence for those who are walking together for the Church in Asia."

# Turning shared suffering into an interfaith cooperation opportunity

In his legendary 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech at the Washington Mall, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a day when people of every colour and creed would join hands to sing together the song of freedom, justice, and brotherhood.

His dream became immortal not because it belonged to a single nation, but because it captured the deepest longing of humanity — for peace, happiness, and human flourishing.

Yet more than half a century later, that dream still seems far away. Wars continue to ravage nations. Natural disasters, poverty, and disease bring untold suffering. Humanity is wounded, and pain knows no distinction of race, culture, or religion.

But paradoxically, it is often within such shared suffering that solidarity is rekindled — where faiths once separated by history or doctrine can meet in compassion, and where common pain becomes the seedbed for empathy, cooperation, and hope.

## Shared pain as a meeting point

When we speak of shared suffering as an opportunity for religions to draw closer, we must first recognise that God, or the Divine, is not the cause of human suffering.

The pain brought by war, poverty, pandemics, or natural disasters does not originate from God as a means of forcing unity.

On the contrary, suffering can deepen division. Wars stem from human division and conflict; poverty often arises from injustice; pandemics and ecological crises are frequently consequences of human irresponsibility toward creation.

Yet, in the face of tragedy, people of all faiths — and even those without faith — are moved by compassion. Shared pain becomes a mysterious “meeting point” that unites hearts across boundaries.

We see this whenever Christians, Buddhists, and followers of other religions join hands to aid victims of natural disasters, care for patients during epidemics, or when religious leaders collectively raise their voices for peace.

In those moments, suffering becomes sacred ground — a space where differences dissolve, and faith reveals its power to heal rather than divide.



Indeed, suffering does not discriminate. It spares neither believer nor non-believer. People may pray in different languages or use different rituals, but tears, as the saying goes, are all the same.

Leaders and representatives of eight religions in southern Vietnam pose for a picture at their annual gathering on Oct 27, 2024, in Ho Chi Minh City. ([ucanews.com/Courtesy\\_tgpsaigon.net](http://ucanews.com/Courtesy_tgpsaigon.net))

## From suffering to fraternity

In times of disaster, the instinct to preserve life stirs in everyone. Shared pain, therefore, can make religions companions on the same road — partners in healing a broken world.

In ordinary times, cooperation among people may be polite but superficial, or driven by mutual benefit. But in moments of collective pain, collaboration takes on a far deeper, even spiritual, dimension.

Then, humanity looks in the same direction — toward the suffering person. The act of working together is no longer mere cooperation; it becomes communion.

As the late Pope Francis wrote in Chapter 8 of *Fratelli Tutti*, when we recognise those who suffer with us as our brothers and sisters in one human family, compassion transcends every religious boundary.

For Christians, the basis for interreligious cooperation lies in the recognition that Christ suffers with all humankind. In the wounded and the afflicted — regardless of their faith — the Christian sees the face of the suffering Christ (Mt 25:31-46). Every form of pain carries equal dignity and calls for healing.

If each religion could recognise the suffering of others as worthy of the same respect as the suffering of its own followers, that would be the foundation for

shared action.

Pain would no longer be what divides, but what unveils the hidden unity of the human family. In this sense, shared suffering is a sacred meeting place — where God works through human compassion to bind hearts together.

## From empathy to action

Solidarity among religions begins with encounter and dialogue. Each faith tradition offers its own vision and methods to ease human pain, yet all are united by belief in a divine source of goodness and a desire for human well-being. This shared spiritual heart allows people to transcend suffering and discover hope.

In Vietnam, annual interreligious gatherings are organised not only to promote dialogue but also to inspire concrete action — to protect human dignity, uplift the poor, and serve the common good.

The question is — how to turn shared pain into an opportunity for interreligious cooperation.

It is both a challenge and a grace. For it provides the moment when religions naturally step outside their own walls to meet others in compassion.

In normal times, believers may hesitate to cross boundaries. But in times of collective pain, solidarity emerges not from power or interest but from empathy — from a heart that knows how to suffer with others.

From that empathy comes real

possibilities for collaboration. Though beliefs may differ, all authentic religions share a commitment to compassion, justice, and peace — values that find their truest expression in serving those who suffer.

Around the world, interfaith efforts continue to grow: caring for the poor, protecting the environment, providing education and health care, responding to natural disasters. Each of these actions bears witness to the power of solidarity and service.

Though our creeds may differ, love and hope are the universal language of faith. Shared suffering thus becomes sacred ground where all religions can meet and cooperate — bringing healing to a wounded world.

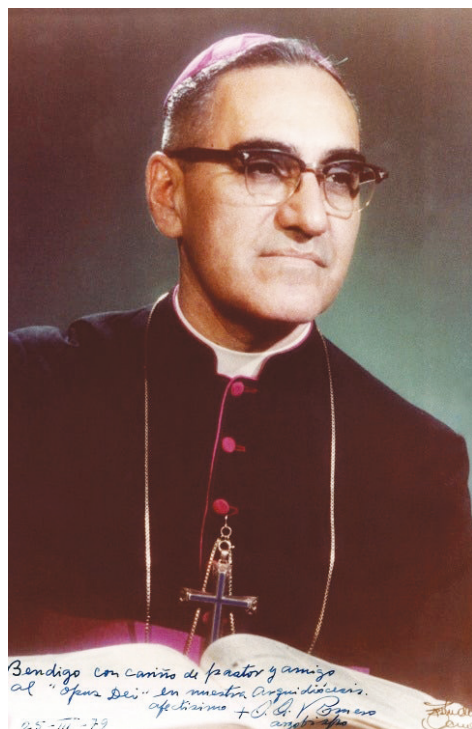
Pain can lead to despair and division, but when received with a listening and compassionate heart, it can also become a bridge of hope.

Differences in belief need not prevent people from working together to defend life and promote peace.

When religions unite to save those who suffer, their cooperation does more than fulfill humanity’s ancient dream of peace. It helps realise, even in part, the Creator’s own dream — that this world might one day reflect His love and compassion for all.

**Sr Maria Hai Chau, SSS [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)**

● *Sr Maria Hai Chau is a member of Servants of the Blessed Sacrament (SSS) based in Xuan Loc Diocese, Vietnam*



## Faith leaders draw inspiration from St Óscar Romero to address migration and trauma

In a Home Depot parking lot near Los Angeles, a vigil was held 40 days after the death of Carlos Montoya, a day labourer killed while fleeing immigration agents. The gathering became a call for moral leadership amid growing fear and trauma within immigrant communities.

Pablo Alvarado of the National Day Labourer Organising Network evoked the memory of St Óscar Romero, the Salvadoran archbishop martyred in 1980, saying, “We don’t have that strong of a moral voice in our country today.”

That same week, at Life Pacific University in San Dimas, the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana held a preaching and migration conference inspired by Romero’s example. Alma Tinoco Ruiz of Duke Divinity School urged

preachers to help communities heal from trauma, drawing on Romero’s ability to “hear the voice of God through both Scripture and the suffering people.”

Speakers addressed how to minister amid the psychological toll of deportations. Tinoco Ruiz cautioned against violent or punitive theologies and called for sermons that offer “tenderness and courage.” She said healing requires time and honesty — “sometimes it needs more than prayer.”

Rev Alexia Salvatierra of Fuller Seminary’s Centro Latino emphasised acknowledging the trauma of migration and removing shame. “It is important to speak about the grace of God,” she said, urging churches to empower immigrants through collective action and agency.

At La Fuente Ministries in Pasadena, the Rev Marcos Canales described how his bilingual congregation faces “a double collective trauma” — fires and immigration raids. The church offers funds for affected families, organises preparedness sessions, and provides groceries to those too afraid to leave home. Inside the church, “stations of grief” help members mourn losses through art and prayer.

Canales preaches that migration is part of God’s divine design for creation — a movement rooted in interdependence and communion. He links today’s migration struggles to the structural sins of colonialism and injustice, saying, “The movement of people isn’t a misfortune; it’s a consequence of history we must remember.” **OSV News**

Christopher Kushi

In the spirit of the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, themed *Pilgrims of Hope*, and in communion with the 98th World Mission Day, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, embarked on a pilgrimage like no other — one that led not to grand cathedrals or historic shrines, but deep into the lush jungles of Gua Musang, Kelantan. From October 13–15, he and his companions journeyed to the Orang Asli villages, bringing with them not material gifts, but the light of faith, hope, and love.

The pilgrimage echoed the words of Pope Leo XIV for World Mission Sunday: “This October 19, as we reflect together on our baptismal call to be missionaries of hope among the peoples, let us commit ourselves anew to the sweet and joyful task of bringing Christ Jesus, our Hope, to the ends of the earth.”

Accompanying Cardinal Sebastian were Msgr Henry Rajoo, Deacon Dave Kameron, FSIC Sisters Florence Nemesius and Lucynia Jeprin, along with lay missionaries Antonius F Neonnub and Christopher Kostka. The journey was made possible through the generous support of the Orang Asli community, led by Joseph Boon Chai and his team from the Light of Shalom Society (LSS).

The LSS, which operates the Shalom Marian Hostel in Tambun, Ipoh, supports Orang Asli children — mainly from the Temiar tribe — in completing their education. This mission trip was both a spiritual encounter and a tangible expression of solidarity with the very communities whose children the LSS serves.

## The heart of mission

In a bamboo prayer hall raised on stilts, the villagers gathered for the Eucharist — a sacred celebration that embodied resilience and grace. Cardinal Sebastian presided, assisted by Msgr Henry, Deacon Dave, and the FSIC Sisters. The day was rich with moments of grace: Baptism and Confirmation, the Anointing of the Sick, catechesis, faith formation, and joyful song. The rosary, gifted to each villager, became both a keepsake and a lifeline of prayer.

Srs Florence and Lucynia bonded with the women, joining them in preparing meals from jungle produce and farm crops. Their laughter mingled with the chatter of children, whose eyes shone with delight at the visitors’ presence. Meanwhile, the men gathered with the clergy for sharing, prayer, and reflection — guided by Joseph Boon, their faithful bridge between two worlds.

On October 14, about 60 villagers filled the simple *ruang ibadah*, pictured below,



Cardinal Sebastian reminded all that this was not a “Santa Claus” expedition, but a true pilgrimage. “We come not to give handouts, but to bear and share the light of hope,” he said. “Let the people experience the glow of joy, love, and care — and may we learn from their simplicity and strength.” He also called for deep respect for the Orang Asli’s *adat* — their culture, values, and traditions — encouraging all to inspire, not impose, the

Gospel message.

From Kampung Kuala Betis, the convoy of three modified 4WDs began a gruelling five-hour trek through rugged terrain — no electricity, no piped water, no phone signal, and certainly no internet. The first stop was Kampung Jader, where the group was warmly welcomed by the Tok Batin and treated to a local feast of hill rice and sup *katak* (frog soup). After a brief stop at Kampung Gawin, they pressed on to

Kampung Pinching in Jerantut, Pahang for dinner and rest. Bathing in the river and sleeping amid the sounds of the jungle brought a deep sense of communion with nature and the Creator.

Heavy rain the next morning turned roads into rivers and tested both courage and faith. Yet, guided by prayer and perseverance, the pilgrims reached Kampung Rang Pos Gob — ready for a full day of ministry.

for Mass. The FSIC Sisters led the singing and prayer, sparking a lively Q&A session as the community expressed an eager hunger to know the Word of God. The Mass culminated in the celebration of Baptism and Confirmation—visible signs of new life in Christ. Dinner that evening was a joyful fellowship: hill rice, *ayam kampung*, *patin tempoyak*, tapioca leaves, and *sambal kulim* — a feast of gratitude and unity.

Before departing, Cardinal Sebastian blessed the community and presented his pectoral cross to the Tok Batin — a powerful symbol of faith and remembrance. After consultation with the elders, he announced that the *ruang ibadah* would be converted into a chapel, its name to be discerned through the dreams and prayers of the community. Msgr Henry, Deacon Dave, and the FSIC Sisters will continue to accompany the community in their journey of faith and hope.



## A legacy remembered

This pilgrimage also paid tribute to the late Fr George Lee (1918–1990), fondly known as *Bapa Orang Asli* for his lifelong dedication to the indigenous communities of Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Negeri Sembilan. His pioneering mission work laid the very foundations upon which today’s efforts continue to flourish.

Fr George’s ministry was a shining testament of faith and compassion, rooted in his deep love for the people he served:

- 1946: Established a vernacular school for the Orang Mantra.
- 1954: Renovated the Chapel of Bonda Maria on Orang Asli reserve land.
- 1955: Founded the Orang Asli Apostolate at the Church of St Joseph, Batu Gajah.
- 1965–1974: Led the Orang Asli Ministry at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar.

- 1974–1985: Continued his ministry at the Church of St John the Baptist, Sungai Siput.
- 1980s: Established eight outstations, including two Mass centres in Perak.

Fr George’s life was a living witness that hope truly takes root where it is sown with love. His legacy continues to inspire missionaries who walk the same paths he once journeyed — bearing Christ’s light to the fringes.

As the convoy made its way out of the jungle, the pilgrims carried home more than memories — they carried lessons in humility, courage, and communion. Their hearts echoed the words of St Paul: “Hope does not disappoint” (Romans 5:5).

For in the heart of the jungle, they found what every pilgrim seeks — not just the destination, but the living presence of Christ, who walks with His people, always and everywhere.



# Heaven's customer service: Press 1 for St Anthony, Press 2 for St Jude

**O**n All Saints' Day, we remember that heaven's heroes weren't born perfect — they just kept the faith, one laugh and one prayer at a time.

All Saints' Day may be a solemnity, but it isn't meant to be sombre. It's heaven's family day — a celebration of those who lived their faith with courage, humour, and hope. Behind every halo is a human story — and often, a good laugh. So, come, All Saints' Day, next year (too late for this year, we

just passed it), let's meet the saints not as marble statues, or in kaleidoscopic colours in stained glass — but as friends who once joked, giggled, cried, and prayed, just like us.

If there's one thing Catholics have mastered over the centuries, it's the art of finding the right heavenly contact for every earthly crisis. There's a saint for every season, reason, and random predicament. Lost your house keys? St. Anthony's on call. Facing an exam you haven't studied for? St Joseph of Cupertino, the patron saint of students, is your man. Waiting for visa approval at the Indian High Commission in Jalan Pahang? Ask St Expeditus — yes, he's real — to expedite things for you.

It's as if heaven operates a divine customer service centre, and the saints are our spiritual helpline operators — each one trained in a different department of human need.

## The saint hotline

Take St Jude, the go-to intercessor for "hopeless cases." If your car won't start, your relationship's on the rocks, or your salary mysteriously vanishes the day after payday, St Jude is probably sighing from heaven: "We've been through worse." Yet behind



## Joe's Jottings

JOSEPH MASILAMANY

the humour lies a deep truth — calling on saints reminds us we're never alone, even in life's absurdities.

Then there's St Anthony of Padua, the most dialled number in heaven. He's been called upon so often that he probably answers prayers on autopilot. Legend says if you lose something and ask St Anthony nicely, you'll find it before the kettle boils. Sometimes what's really lost, of course, isn't the item — it's our patience.

## A saint for every need

When your flight gets rescheduled for the third time and your AirAsia app won't stop apologising, St Christopher — the patron of travellers — understands. In the old days, he was invoked to keep ships from sinking; now, he probably helps travellers survive retiming, oops — *Now Everybody Can Wait!*

And if you've ever made a mistake you thought was unforgivable, remember St Dismas — the "good thief" crucified next to Jesus. Tradition holds that he was canonised by Christ Himself with the words, "Today, you will be with Me in Paradise." St Dismas is living proof that redemption isn't about perfect timing; it's about perfect mercy.

St Philip Neri, meanwhile, proves that holiness doesn't have to be humourless. Known as the "Apostle of Joy," Philip once shaved only one side of his beard before meeting the bishop, just to remind the Church that God loves cheerful hearts more than polished appearances. If holiness had a laugh track, it would sound like St Philip's chuckle.

## Heaven's humour and human hope

What's beautiful about Catholic devotion

to the saints is that it's not superstition — it's solidarity. Each saint is a window into the human struggle transformed by grace. They weren't superheroes born perfect. As Pope Francis once said, "The Saints are not supermen, nor were they born perfect. They were ordinary people like us... who lived normal lives with joys and sorrows, struggles and hopes."

So, for every impossible situation, there's a saint who's been there, prayed through it, and come out laughing on the other side. Lost your patience in traffic? St Christopher's probably nodding in sympathy. Burnt your dinner while doomscrolling? St Lawrence of Rome, the patron of cooks — and the famously grilled martyr — would simply grin and say, "Turn me over, I'm done on this side."

Wrestling with doubt? St Thomas knows the feeling all too well. Need a dose of courage? St Joan of Arc's right behind you, banner raised and heart on fire. And if the stork is late in delivering, don't forget St Anne of Bukit Mertajam.

Holiness, it turns out, isn't about being flawless. It's about keeping faith through the funny, fragile, everyday moments that make us human.

## Faith for the everyday

The saints make heaven feel a little closer because they've lived through all the messiness we face — broken plans, bad weather, tough jobs, stubborn hearts. They remind us that grace doesn't skip the ordinary.

When you ask St Joseph for work, St Raphael for healing, or St Francis for peace of mind, what you're really saying is: "Lord, teach me to see You even here." The saints are like family — older siblings who've gone ahead but still care about the rest of us stumbling along behind.

And yes, sometimes faith itself feels

like a lost item — something we set down somewhere between the bills and the noise of the world. That's when the saints step in, not as magic-makers, but as fellow pilgrims who whisper: *Keep walking. The light's still ahead.*

## The sacred sense of humour

If the saints could speak today, they might tell us to lighten up a little. St Philip Neri once said, "A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one." Maybe that's why God gives us saints with quirks and stories — to remind us that sanctity isn't about solemn faces but sincere hearts.

Imagine heaven's conversation: St Peter checking IDs at the gate, St Anthony finding lost halos, St Jude reassuring newcomers that yes, even their hopeless cases can be counted in. Holiness, you realise, is a lot more human — and hilarious — than we think.

So next time life goes sideways, instead of despairing, find your saintly friend and have a laugh with heaven. Pray with the saints, not to escape your humanity, but to embrace it — joy, flaws, laughter and all.

And if you're not sure which one to call upon, just smile, whisper a prayer, and know that, somewhere up there, St John XXIII, better known as "The Laughing Pope", is already laughing — and reminding you that even the smallest smile can be a prayer.

*Joseph Masilamany is a veteran journalist and storyteller whose heart beats for the sacred in the ordinary. A cradle Catholic with a reporter's curiosity, he finds holiness not only in the pews but in the potholes of daily life — where faith meets humour, and grace often hides behind a smile. In his writings, he blends laughter, loss, and light — reminding readers that God's grace often arrives with a wink, not a thunderclap.*

## Faith in the small things: Growing up in humble beginnings

I was born into a large, humble family — eight of us in total: my parents, my five siblings, and me. Ours was not a life of material abundance, but one rich in love, faith, and perseverance. My father worked as a policeman, while my mother dedicated her life to raising us and keeping our home in order.

Though times were often hard, we never went without the essentials — not because of wealth, but because of grace. Looking back, I realise that God's providence was woven into every season of our lives.

My mother was the heart of our household. A devoted housewife, she gave herself completely to her vocation as a wife and mother. Her faith was quiet but steadfast. She was a woman deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Every morning and evening, no matter where she was, she would pray the Holy Rosary.

The rhythm of her voice, reciting the *Hail Marys* and *Our Fathers*, became the heartbeat of our home. To my mother, the Rosary was not just a prayer — it was a way of life. She turned to it in moments of joy, sorrow, and uncertainty. When we faced difficult days at work or struggled with our daily lives or even illness, we would turn to her to pray for us.

Her faith was unwavering, rooted in the promise that Mary always intercedes for her children. It was only fitting, then, that when her time on earth came to an end two months ago, God called her home on September 8 — the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To us, it felt like a divine embrace, a final confirmation that she had lived and died under Mary's maternal care.

My father, on the other hand, was a man of duty. As a policeman, he worked long and difficult hours. His uniform represented honour and service, and through him, my siblings and me learned the dignity of honest labour. Though his job was demanding, he never wavered in his faith.

On Sundays, no matter how tired he was, he made sure we were all dressed and ready for Mass. His life embodied the verse, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Our home was modest, as we lived in one or two bedroom barracks crowded with children, hand-me-down clothes, and the sound of laughter and sibling squabbles. Privacy was rare, but love was abundant. My siblings and I shared everything — food, space, dreams, and sometimes, even tears.

We didn't have much in material possessions, but our parents made sure our faith was abundant. Sunday Mass was the anchor of our week. We knew the hymns, the prayers, the responses — and those sacred moments rooted us in something far greater than ourselves.

Even when money was tight, my parents insisted on giving a small offering at Mass, teaching us that generosity is not about the size of the gift but the love with which it's given.

There were difficult days — times when bills piled up, or when we weren't sure how my



## From the Other Side

REGINA WILLIAM

father's salary would stretch far enough. Yet through every trial, my parents reminded us to trust in God's provision. We learned early that faith is not believing God will give us everything we want, but trusting that He will provide what we truly need.

Growing up with five siblings was its own school of virtue. We learned patience through shared responsibilities, humility through simple living, and forgiveness through the daily bumps of family life. In many ways, our home mirrored the early

Christian families described in Scripture — imperfect but full of faith. My parents' greatest gift to us wasn't material; it was the deep conviction that God was always with us.

Even as children, we could sense that their faith wasn't just a Sunday obligation — it was the anchor that held our family steady.

After my mother's recent passing, the sound of her rosary beads and the soft echo of her prayers lingers in our hearts. Her death on the Blessed Mother's birthday was both sorrowful and miraculous — a sign of how deeply her life had been entwined with Mary's. Whenever I pray the Rosary now, I feel her presence near, guiding me just as she did when I was young. Her devotion continues to inspire me to live a faith that is steadfast, gentle, and rooted in love.

Over time, I have come to understand that our humble beginnings were not a limitation but a blessing. They taught us resilience,

gratitude, and dependence on God's grace. We didn't need luxury to feel rich — we had each other, and we had faith. The lessons of those years remain deeply etched in my heart.

Today, when I face challenges or moments of uncertainty, I often return in memory to that small, noisy home filled with prayer and love. I remember my mother's voice reciting the Rosary, my father's quiet strength, and the joy of sitting together at the dinner table, even when the meal was simple. I realise now that those were sacred moments — living sacraments of God's presence in the ordinary.

The world often measures success by wealth or status, but my upbringing taught me that true success is measured by faithfulness. My parents didn't leave us riches or property; they gave us something far more valuable — a living faith, rooted in trust and perseverance.

In every struggle and triumph since, I've held on to that foundation. Humble beginnings don't define your limits — they define your strength. When guided by faith, even the smallest acts of love can echo into eternity.

And indeed, it is through Christ's strength — and the loving intercession of His Blessed Mother — that our family journeyed from humble beginnings to a life filled with faith, love, and gratitude.

*Regina William is an ex-journalist turned head of communications, now full-time grandmother to three children aged between six and three, crisscrossing the globe to play the role. She can be reached at regina.william1223@gmail.com*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

# The Psalms as prayer

**“G**od behaves in the Psalms in ways He is not allowed to behave in systemic theology.”

That quip from Sebastian Moore might be highlighted at a time when fewer people want to use the Psalms as a form of prayer because they feel offended that the Psalms speak of murder, revenge, anger, violence, war-making, and patriarchy.

Yet, for centuries, the Psalms have been central to both Jewish and Christian prayer. They form the very heart of the Divine Office (the Church’s prayer for the world), are sung in Vespers’ services, are prayed daily by millions of men and women, and have been chanted by monks for centuries as a central part of their prayer.

Why the objection to the Psalms? Some ask: “How can I pray with words that are sometimes full of hatred, anger, violence, and speak of the glories of war and of crushing one’s enemies in the name of God?” For others, the objection is to the patriarchal nature of the Psalms. For yet others, the offence is aesthetic: “They’re terrible poetry!” they say.

Perhaps the Psalms aren’t great poetry and they do, undeniably, smack of violence, war, hatred of one’s enemies in the name of God, and the desire for vengeance. They’re also patriarchal in character. But does that

make them poor language for prayer? No, to the contrary.

One of the classical definitions of prayer suggests that “prayer is lifting mind and heart to God.” Simple, clear, accurate. Our problem is that we too seldom actually do this when we pray. Rather than lifting to God what’s actually on our minds and in our hearts, we treat God as someone from whom we need to hide the real truth of our thoughts and feelings. Instead of pouring out mind and heart, we tell God what we think God wants to hear – not murderous thoughts, desire for vengeance, or our disappointment with Him.

But expressing those feelings is the whole point. What makes the Psalms so apt for prayer is that they do not hide the truth from God and they express the whole gamut of our actual feelings. They give honest voice to what’s actually going on in our minds and hearts.

Sometimes we feel good and our spontaneous impulse is to speak words of praise and gratitude. The Psalms give us that voice. They speak of God’s goodness – love, friends, faith, health, food, wine, enjoyment. But we don’t always feel that way. Our lives also have their cold, lonely seasons when disappointment and bitterness smoulder under the surface. The Psalms then give us

honest voice and we can open all those angry feelings to God.

At other times, we are filled with the sense of our own inadequacy with the fact that we cannot measure up to the trust and love that’s given us. The Psalms give us voice for this, asking God to have mercy, to soften our hearts, to wash us clean, to give us a fresh start. And then still there are times when we feel disappointed with God Himself and need in some way to express this. The Psalms give us this voice (“Why are You so silent? Why are You so far from me?”) even as they make us aware that God is not afraid of our anger and bitterness, but, like a loving parent, only wants us to come and talk about it.

The Psalms are a privileged vehicle for prayer because they lift the full range of our thoughts and feelings to God.

But we tend to struggle with that. First, because our age often fails to grasp metaphor and taken literally, some of the images within the Psalms are offensive. Second, we are often in denial about our true feelings. It’s hard to admit that we feel some of the things we sometimes feel: grandiosity, sexual obsessions, jealousies, desire for revenge, murderous thoughts. Too often our prayer belies our actual thoughts and feelings and tells God what we think God wants

to hear. The Psalms have more honesty.

As American poet and essayist Kathleen Norris puts it: If you pray regularly “there is no way you can do it right. You are not always going to sit up straight, let alone think holy thoughts. You’re not going to wear your best clothes but whatever isn’t in the dirty clothes basket. You come to the Bible’s great book of praises through all the moods and conditions of life, and while you feel like hell, you sing anyway. To your surprise, you find that the Psalms do not deny your true feelings but allow you to reflect them, right in front of God and everyone.” Feel good aphorisms that express how we think we ought to feel are no substitute for the earthy realism of the Psalms which express how we actually do feel at times. Anyone who would lift mind and heart to God without ever mentioning feelings of bitterness, jealousy, vengeance, hatred, and war, is better suited to write greeting cards than to give out spiritual counsel.

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

## What if you miss your vocation?

I’m a positive thinker, so I’m convinced there’s someone out there for everyone, but of course, my outlook doesn’t always match up to reality.

Some people worry they broke up with the love of their life, only realised it after it was too late, and now will never get married. They regret that they lost their nerve at the thought of marriage, that they took the relationship for granted, or mistakenly thought they wanted freedom to enjoy single life for longer. The current zeitgeist has cold feet at the idea of marrying at a younger age and encourages folks to not settle down too soon. Because of this, a lot of relationships end, which in retrospect, would have provided life-long happiness.

There are also single people who have been searching everywhere for a mate but simply haven’t had any luck. Now they’re concerned they’ve missed their chance. They fret that they haven’t looked hard enough or put themselves into the right situations. Now they’re doomed to grow old alone.

As a priest, sometimes people come to me asking if they missed their marriage vocation and lost their chance at happiness. They don’t know how to move forward and are trapped by regret. One of the greatest virtues is hope, which keeps us motivated and inspired, but it’s a real challenge to maintain hope when life hasn’t turned out as planned.

As Catholics, we have an additional concern when it comes to finding a life calling, because we have to sort out precisely who is called to the priesthood or religious life. The idea of becoming a priest or religious can be daunting. It requires a great deal of sacrifice. The idea of becoming a parish priest intimidates young men because they observe how much responsibility a priest has. This was my experience as a young man. I worried I would never be confident enough to be a

good homilist or that I’d give bad advice in the confessional and ruin someone’s life. I always knew I had a vocation, but there were at least a few months leading up to my entrance into a theology program in college when I was in serious denial.

I wonder what my life would have looked like if I hadn’t followed through. Would I be full of regret?

In our Latin Mass Oratory, we’re blessed to have a larger than usual number of young men and women discerning vocations. When they ask for advice, I tell them to not be anxious, that God will get them to the right place in the right timing if they’re open and attentive to his call.

I mention that it’s always a good idea to explore all the vocational options even if it’s only to be sure that certain vocations are not the right ones. That way, the decision is made with all possible information.

The way I see it, God calls each of us to a vocation, but even if we’re slow to accept it or miss it entirely, he won’t hold our flaws against us. Even if we feel we miss that initial calling, we might get another chance later, or God might even provide a new path to find him. Keep in mind that he has known from all eternity how our freedom would interact with his grace. He responded to Adam and Eve’s failed use of freedom with the greatest promise of all – our Saviour.

I’ve known some young men who, sadly, were pressured out of attending seminary by their parents. Yet today, God has given them new paths and they’re happily married. I do think that God has a plan for each person’s life, but even when those plans go awry, he works to get us back onto a happy path. He is not in the business of dooming his children to frustration and sadness.

My own vocation story is so long and twisting that even I have trouble keeping all the details straight. I think it would’ve been easy at multiple points in my life to wonder



starlings images

if I’d missed my calling. In fact, I wondered that many times. Over the years, though, I’ve come to see the wisdom in the old saying that God writes straight with crooked lines. If I can make it, anyone can.

### Going forward

If I had to summarise what I’ve learned over the years, I suppose it would be the following:

#### Don’t plan. Discern.

When we fixate on a plan, the idea we get stuck in our mind might not be the correct one and it may blind us to other options. Put aside preconceived plans and discern. Pray and listen. God is the God of fresh beginnings. He’ll probably give you insight into a fresh vocation if you think you’ve missed yours or reveal that you haven’t, in fact, missed your vocation at all.

#### Don’t dwell on past regrets.

We can’t get hung up on paths not travelled. We also cannot fall into the misconception that the only possible vocations are priesthood or marriage. Everyone has a vocation. Right now. Be the best employee

you can be, best son or daughter, parent, friend, lay catechist, artist, gardener, teacher, fisherman...

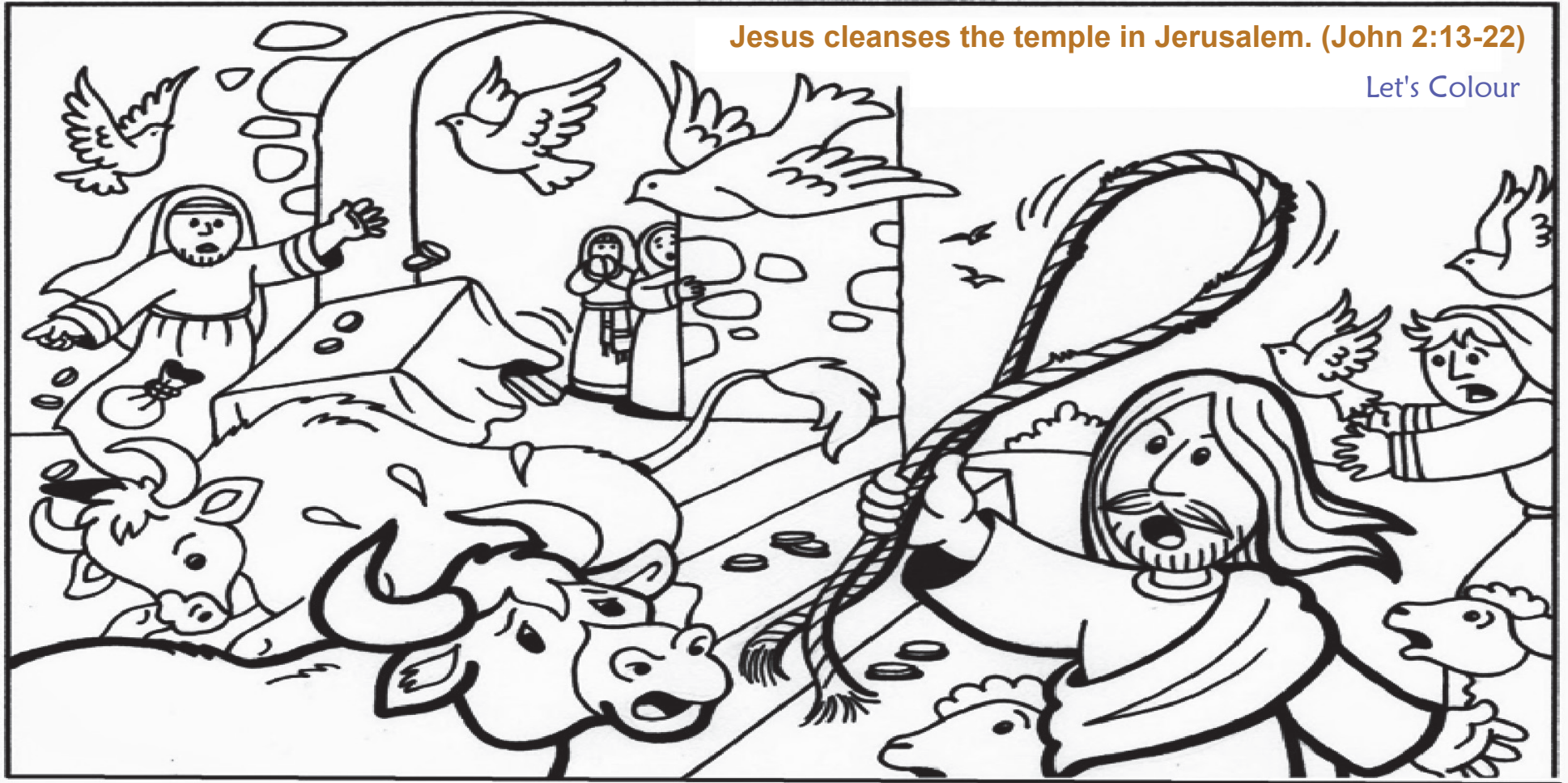
### You may not have missed your vocation at all.

Difficulties, obstacles, or suffering doesn’t automatically mean you’re on the wrong path. You may think your life would’ve been better if you’d chosen differently, but that’s wishful thinking. Every vocation has challenges and setbacks, even while I firmly believe each person’s calling contributes to their happiness. Remember that happiness doesn’t necessarily mean easy success or lack of struggle. The best outcomes always require effort.

The amount of pressure on us to not miss our vocation can be tremendous. It really is too much.

Remember that God always wants the best for His children. He’ll never abandon us to a meaningless life. Knowing this, we don’t need to worry so much about finding a vocation. We just need to be attentive and discerning, because God is always calling us onward. **Fr Michael Rennie, Aletea**

# Little Catholics' corner

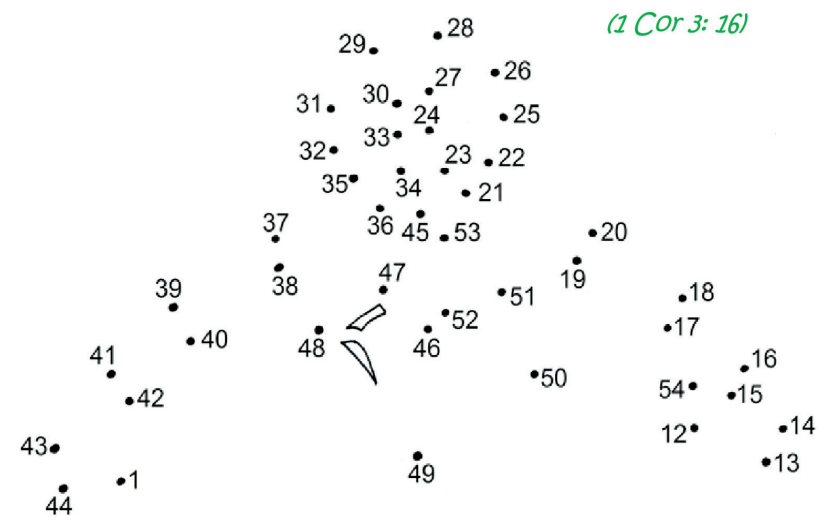


Jesus cleanses the temple in Jerusalem. (John 2:13-22)

Let's Colour

In the code key, you can write each symbol means. Write the letter above the symbol and you can read the secret message!

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?



For we are co-workers in God's service;

you are God's field, God's building.

(1 Cor 3:9)

Dear children,

What tools do we use to clean houses? Do you ever help your parents clean your house?

When Jesus travelled to Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration, He went to the temple. I think He wanted to rest and pray. But He couldn't believe what He saw! People were selling cattle, sheep, and doves to be

used as sacrifice in the temple. Some men were even charging people to change their money so they could pay their temple taxes. It looked more like a flea market than a place to worship God.

Jesus was so angry that He made a whip from rope, and drove the cattle, sheep, and those who were selling them out of the temple.

He also turned over the money

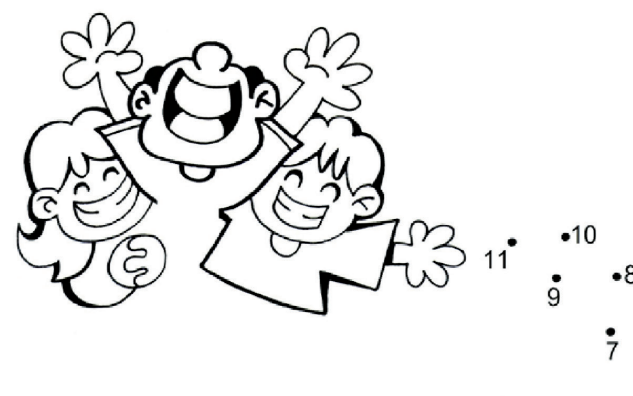
changers' tables. To the ones who were selling the doves, He said, "Get out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a market! Jesus did some serious house cleaning that day!

As we think about Jesus cleansing the temple, we can also be reminded that there is some other cleaning that needs to be done. The Bible tells us that we are the temple of God and that

the Spirit of God lives in us (1 Corinthians. 3:16).

Children, the Bible reading today asks us to reflect about how our hearts might need cleansing. Let us remember that we are God's temple and the Holy Spirit lives in us. May our lives, deeds and words always be according to His will!

Love  
Aunty Eliz





## SEOUL WYD 2027 TO FOCUS ON CARE FOR CREATION, ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION



Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taick

SOUTH KOREA: Organisers of the 2027 Catholic World Youth Day (WYD) in South Korea have formally unveiled the plans for the event, which is expected to draw more than 1 million youths from across the world.

In a press conference organised on October 27, the WYD Local Organising Committee (LOC) said it had finalised the Master Plan and had “officially entered the full implementation phase of preparations.”

Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taick of Seoul, who chairs the LOC, emphasized that the announcement represented far more than an administrative milestone.

“This is not merely the unveiling of an event plan; rather, it is a declaration of faith and hope, a solemn pledge to the young people of the world,” Chung said.

The announcement of the plans is also “an earnest invitation to reflect together on the path that humanity is called to walk as one family under God,” Chung emphasised.

The prelate added that “Seoul in 2027... will become a city of hope, a city of solidarity, and a city of mission.”

Bishop Paul Kyung-sang Lee, General Coordinator of WYD Seoul 2027, Fr Joseph Lee Young-je, executive secretary of the LOC, and other officials attended the meeting held at the Omnibus Park Convention Hall of the Catholic University of Korea.

Bishop Lee said that the event will “strengthen the courage to face the challenges of our time, and embrace the spiritual values that guide humanity toward a future of life and hope.”

Bishop Lee also said that the WYD event will focus on the themes of Truth, Love, and Peace. He noted that the overarching theme of Love embraces care for creation and ecological conversion.

The prelate also announced plans to establish international youth networks dedicated to environmental stewardship, along with symposia and workshops where “young people will share ideas and initiatives for the common good.”

According to the schedule, the WYD is slated to take place from July 29 to Aug 8, 2027.

The first phase, known as the Days in the Dioceses (July 29 – Aug 2), will be hosted across Korea’s 15 dioceses, followed by the main events

(Aug 3 – 8) held throughout Seoul, the LOC said.

Participants of the Days in the Dioceses program get the opportunity to experience the life of local communities through parish programs and homestays with host families.

The main events will include six central celebrations, the committee said.

The celebrations include the opening Mass, welcome ceremony with the Holy Father, Youth Festival, catechesis, Way of the Cross, and the vigil and the closing Mass.

Archbishop Chung is slated to preside over the opening Mass, which will be attended by the members of the College of Cardinals and bishops from more than 160 countries.

The Welcome Ceremony, marking the Holy Father’s first encounter with young pilgrims, will combine cultural and artistic performances with the Pope’s message to youth, the committee said.

Bishop Lee described the Youth Festival as “a vibrant celebration of faith and creativity unfolding each day.”

The Way of the Cross is “a profound moment for young people to meditate on the sufferings of humanity and rediscover hope and courage,” Lee added.

Fr Lee Young-je presented detailed plans for immigration procedures, accommodation, meals, transportation, and safety management aimed to ensure that “every young person, regardless of background or religion, can take part.” [wydseoul.org](http://wydseoul.org)

# YOUTH RADIATE FAITH THAT GLOW

## 2025



Isaac Raj Philip

**KLANG:** On October 25, the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes was filled with joy and excitement as young people gathered for G.L.O.W. (God Lights Our Way) 2025. Organised by the Our Lady of Lourdes Youth Ministry (OLLYM), the evening was more than just an event — it was a beautiful time of prayer, friendship, and renewal in Christ.

From the moment the youth arrived, the hall was alive with energy and happiness. The programme started with fun skits, lively music, and cheerful laughter that showed the unity and spirit of the young people. The em-



cees led the evening with warmth and enthusiasm, helping everyone feel welcome and open to God’s presence.

The praise and worship session filled the hall with songs of joy and thanksgiving. Hands were raised, hearts were open, and voices joined together to praise God. Many said it was a touching moment that helped them feel closer to one another and to God.

In his meaningful talk and prayer, Fr Gnanaselvam shared that to “GLOW” means to shine with the love and light of Christ every day. He encouraged the youth to be lights of hope — to bring love where there is sadness and to stay strong in faith, even during difficult times. He also thanked the ASAYO team from ArchKL for supporting and guiding the parish youth in their faith journey.

The evening continued with fun ice-breaker games that brought everyone together

in laughter and teamwork. One participant shared, “It reminded me that faith is not only about praying, but also about joy, friendship, and community.”

After dinner, the fun carried on with face-painting booths and fundraising stalls to support World Youth Day and parish youth projects. These simple and creative activities also became ways to serve others and give back to the community.

Later, Fr Selva led a quiet reflection session, inviting everyone to look within their hearts and renew their friendship with God. His message about love, courage, and purpose touched many people deeply. During the sharing session, several youths gave testimonies about how GLOW helped them find peace and strength in God. One young person said, “I came here feeling unsure, but I’m going home knowing that God’s light is al-



ways with me.”

The World Youth Day 2027 sharing inspired excitement about joining young people from all over the world to celebrate faith together. In his thanksgiving speech, Youth leader Isaac thanked the committee, volunteers, priests, and all who made the event possible. He encouraged everyone to keep supporting one another and to help the next youth leaders carry the light of Christ forward.

The night ended with a joyful “Jammed Sesh”, filled with music, laughter, and fellowship — a true celebration of God’s love. As the lights dimmed, hearts continued to glow with the reminder that God truly lights our way.

G.L.O.W. 2025 was more than a youth gathering — it was a moment of faith, joy, and friendship where the youth of OLL were reminded that they are called to shine for Christ, always and everywhere.

# CSSUM's annual MacNite returns

**PETALING JAYA:** The Catholic Students Society of Universiti Malaya (CSSUM) successfully hosted its annual Meet and Connect Night (MacNite) on October 19 at Loyola Hall, Church of St Francis Xavier (SFX). The event brought together a vibrant crowd of students, spanning from excited first-years to seniors, for an evening brimming with faith, fellowship, and fun.

The gathering served as the perfect platform to introduce the latest batch of Catholic students to the vibrant community that awaits them at Universiti Malaya (UM). From the outset, the atmosphere was charged with excitement and warmth, setting the stage for a memorable night.



There was the introduction of the new core team, followed by the planned activities which CSSUM had planned throughout the year.

The evening's itinerary was a thoughtful blend of social activities and spiritual reflection. Laughter and faith-filled conversations echoed throughout Loyola Hall as students bonded over a series of interactive games designed to break the ice and foster quick connections across different academic years. These activities perfectly underscored the society's commitment to building a supportive, familial atmosphere. Following the games, the mood gently shifted towards a deeper, more reflective tone. The latter part of the event featured an engaging worship session led by the Praise and Worship Bureau of CSSUM, a unifying moment that reminded everyone of the shared spiritual foundation that ties the community together.

A key highlight of the event was the presence of faculty and spiritual leaders, who offered encouraging words to the newcomers. A particularly impactful ad-



dress was given by Prof Dr Yvonne Lim Ai Lian, the Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) at UM. Her speech was genuinely heartwarming, focusing on welcoming the freshmen/women and encouraging them to fully embrace their university journey from all aspects, including academically, socially, and spiritually. She emphasised the importance of finding a balance and leveraging the support system offered by CSSUM as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of campus life.

Emeritus Professor Dr Ng Kwan Hoong also talked about being the light of the

world, even branding a phrase called "MacLight", modelling it after the society's flagship event, MacNite. He narrated how youth, particularly in campus life, have the opportunity to be a guiding light in spite of their daily commitments and work. "Doing small things, like a prayer, bringing friends to church, is one of the ways of being a guiding light in today's World", recalled one of the participants on Prof Ng's talk.

The event was also enlivened by the presence of SFX parish priest, Fr Alvin Ng, SJ. Known for his engaging and dynamic personality, Fr Alvin's welcoming speech also highlighted the importance of a faith-filled journey stepping into varsity life. His presence underscored the strong spiritual guidance and mentorship available to the students, encouraging them to remain rooted in their faith even amidst their rigorous academic pursuits.

The annual MacNite is more than just a welcoming event; it's a powerful statement about the enduring spirit and supportive network of Catholic students at Universiti Malaya. It was a time filled with shared joy, genuine connections, and purposeful worship, successfully creating an immediate sense of belonging for the freshmen.

As the students depart from Loyola Hall and headed back to their university life, the event's impact was clear: the new Catholic students at UM are not just joining a university; they are being welcomed into a faith-filled community ready to support them every step of the way. CSSUM looks forward to a year of growth, service, and fellowship, building on the strong foundation laid by this wonderful welcome night. *Adam Paul, CSSUM*



## Theology of the

Overall, I truly enjoyed the TOB (Theology of the Body) session. Although I wasn't very participative during the Q&A segments, I still gained a lot of valuable insights from the discussions.

At first, I felt a little uncomfortable and unsure about the topics being shared. However, as the session went on, I appreciated how cooperative and mature everyone was in approaching the subject. The TOB team handled even the more sensitive topics with great professionalism and respect, which made it easier to open up and learn.

Spiritually, this camp brought me closer to God. I was deeply reminded of His infinite and unconditional love — that even in our sinfulness, He never stops loving us. The session touched me emotionally and reaffirmed my faith that God truly exists and continues to love us beyond measure.

One of the topics that had the greatest impact on me was authentic love. It helped me gain a clearer understanding of what true love means in the eyes of God. I was reminded to live each day with more kindness, gratitude, and sincerity.

I also learned that God created men and women to complement one another — not in competition, but in harmony. Women are meant to be cherished and respected, not objectified or pursued superficially. This beautiful truth reminded me to trust in God's timing and believe that He has a perfect plan for each of us, including the person we are meant to be with.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of this meaningful learning experience. I'm truly grateful and have enjoyed it tremendously. **Violet Alexis, Church of the Visitation, Seremban**

# CIC REVIVES YOUTH ALPHA AFTER 18 YEARS

**PORT DICKSON:** After nearly two decades, the Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), Port Dickson, recently conducted its first Youth Alpha programme since 2007, bringing together 12 young participants aged 18 to 22 for a journey of faith, discovery, and fellowship.

The programme was held with the strong support and encouragement of Fr Edwin Peter, and coordinated by David and Clare Rajan, both dedicated parishioners of CIC.

Four youth from the Church of St Therese, Nilai also joined the sessions, strengthening the bond between the two parish communities

The sessions were presented by members of the Alpha Kuala Lumpur Diocesan Team — Damian Prakash, *pic*, Clara Pat Ro, Terence Andrew, and Viola Rani — who brought energy, warmth, and thought-provoking insights to each session. They were ably assisted by CIC youth Christina Michael and Lily Selvaraja, along with catechists, Rita Marie Roche and Tracy Tham, who helped facilitate discussions and



*Damian Prakash giving one of the sessions during the Youth Alpha programme.*

activities throughout the programme.

Over the weekend of Oct 18 and 19, participants explored a range of meaningful topics — from "Who is Jesus?" and "Why Did Jesus Die?" to deeper reflections on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. These sessions allowed the youths to strengthen their understanding of faith and encounter

God in a more personal way.

Many participants shared that the experience was both eye-opening and life-changing.

Asella Grace testified: "I further understand the meaning of repentance and how I can be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Meanwhile, Marvynn Tan shared: "I learned how to pray in a new way by using the formula of A.C.T.S. Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. It has helped me to pray in a more structured way."

The Youth Alpha concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and community among the participants, many of whom expressed a desire to continue growing in faith and service.

The success of this revival marks a hopeful new chapter for CIC Port Dickson's youth ministry — a reminder that God continues to inspire and move hearts, especially among the young.



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

MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of



**SANTHANASAMY THANIEL**

From the Lord: 13/5/1958  
To the Lord: 10/11/2020

*'You will always be in our hearts... Because in there you're still alive.'*

Deeply missed by, Wife, son, daughter, in-laws and grandchildren.

7th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of



**Joseph Marcel Gomez**  
Departed:

15 November 2018  
*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." — 2 Tim 4:7*

Always remembered and loved by your wife, son, family, relatives and friends.

22nd Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of



**Teresa Avila Fernandez**  
Departed: 11-11-2003

*"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." — Ps. 116.9*

Fondly remembered by Son - Christopher Joel and loved ones.

5th Anniversary  
Always in Our Hearts



**John Fernandez**  
17 August 1930 - 9 October 2020

*Nothing can separate us from His Love Romans 8:39*

Deeply missed by wife, children and grandson.

14th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of

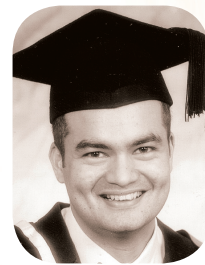


**Jais Fernandez**  
Returned to Jesus on 12 November 2011

*Absolve, we beseech thee, O Lord, the soul of thy servant — Jais Fernandez from every bond of sin that, in the glory of Resurrection, he shall rise to a glorious and eternal life with the Angels and Saints, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

Deeply missed and always remembered by wife Sarah, family and loved ones.

23rd Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of



**Eric Singh Lahre**  
16-04-1969 ~ 13-11-2002

*O Death, Where is thy victory? O Death, Where is thy sting? — 1 Cor. 15:55.*

Deeply missed and forever remembered by Mum and Rod

36th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of



**Aleykutty James**  
Departed: 12-11-1989

*Upright and just in all her ways, Loyal and true through all her days, Silently suffered patiently borne, God took her home to suffer no more.*

Always remembered by loving children, grandchildren and loved ones. May she rest in peace.

18th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of

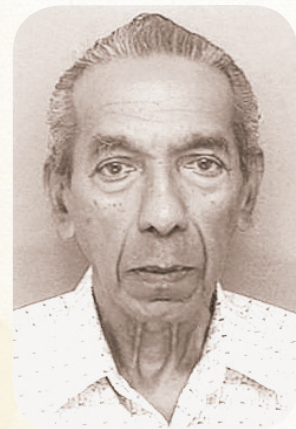


**Antony Raj Manikam**

Born: 19 July 1961  
Departed: 10 November 2007

*For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life... (John 3:16)*

Deeply missed and always remembered by Chelli, annis, brother, sisters, nieces and nephews.



In Loving Memory of  
**SOOSAI SANTHANASAMY**  
15 Nov. 1929 to 14 Nov. 2016

9th Anniversary

Memorial Mass is offered on Friday, 14th November at 6.00pm at St Ignatius Church, Taman Plaza, PJ.

*Fond memories of our Beloved One who has touched our hearts in one way or another, by his own way of life. In him was love, charity, respect, patience and a deep concern for one another. He was ever ready to assist and serve where required.*

*I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, even if he dies shall live forever. Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, May the perpetual light shine on him. May his soul rest in peace.*

Remembered by Family and Friends.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY  
In ever loving memory of



**GEORGE MICHAEL EDWIN VALLADARES**

(6.5.1935 - 13.11.2021)

Forever in our hearts and deeply missed by family and friends.

In Loving Memory of  
Our Beloved

**BEATRICE BOEY YOKE PHENG**

**ESTHER BOEY YOKE MOY**



4 July 1940 - 10 November 2015

15 October 1957 - 27 September 2021

10th Anniversary 4th Anniversary

In remembrance of a life of grace. Forever cherished, never forgotten.

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**"ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD. AND LET THY PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM. MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN PEACE. AMEN."**

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10th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory of  
**Emanuel Joseph Masilamany**  
18th Dec, 1955 - 30th Oct, 2015



*In God's care you rest above, a decade later, we continue to carry your memory with us - like a cherished gem that sparkles even in the darkest nights.*

Deeply missed and fondly remembered by family, relatives, loved ones and all who carry your memory in their hearts.

40th Day Memorial  
In Loving Memory Of Our Beloved



**Cesilia Charles**

BORN: 21ST NOVEMBER 1969  
DEPARTED: 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

*Heavenly Father, we come before you on this 40th day to remember and honour her life. We thank you for the blessing of her presence in our lives — for her faith, her strength, and her boundless love. May you, O Lord, grant her eternal peace and rest in your heavenly kingdom.*

Lovingly remembered and deeply missed by her husband, daughter, son, and loved ones...

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# Drawing new maps of hope: Pope Leo XIV's vision for education

VATICAN: Reflecting on the millions of children who still lack access to basic education, and on the crises caused by war, migration, inequality, and poverty, Pope Leo XIV has called the Church to renew her educational mission with courage, creativity, and faith.

In his Apostolic Letter *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, signed on October 27 and released to mark the 60th anniversary of the Vatican II declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Pope affirms that education remains “one of the highest expressions of Christian charity.”

He writes that, in a fragmented and digitalised age, the insights of the Council continue to inspire the Church to “build bridges” and form persons who unite intellectual rigour with compassion. Education, he insists, “is not an accessory activity, but forms the very fabric of evangelisation,” giving rise to a “firmament of works and charisms” that continue to bear fruit today.

### A Living Tradition

Education, the Pope reminds, is a “history of the Spirit at work.” He recalls St Augustine’s image of the true teacher as one who “awakens the desire for truth and freedom,” tracing the Church’s educational heritage from the monastic schools of early Christianity to the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits.

He pays tribute to educators such as St Joseph Calasanz, St John Baptist de La Salle, St Marcellin Champagnat, and St John Bosco, who each served the poor and marginalised through innovative methods.

He also honours women who transformed education through their courage and compassion — among them Josephine Bakhita, Maria Montessori, Frances Cabrini, Katharine Drexel, and Elizabeth Ann Seton — whose witness opened opportunities for girls, migrants, and the disadvantaged.

### Education as a Shared Mission

Pope Leo XIV describes education as a “choral work” — a shared vocation that brings together teachers, students, families, and society. Naming St John Henry Newman co-patron of education alongside St Thomas Aquinas, he highlights the need for renewal grounded in empathy, openness, and dialogue.

Catholic schools and universities, he says, must form the whole person — “mind, heart, and hands” — integrating knowledge with discernment, justice, and mercy. Questions, he adds, must not be silenced, but guided by trust and accompaniment. Teaching, therefore, is a vocation of service that offers “time, competence, and compassion.”

### The Human Person at the Centre

Echoing Pope Paul VI’s warning against reducing education to functional training or economic productivity, Leo XIV insists that every person is “a face, a story, a vocation.” Education, he writes, “measures its worth not by efficiency but by dignity, jus-



Pope Leo XIV signs his apostolic letter on Catholic education, “Drawing New Maps of Hope,” at the end of a Mass with students from the pontifical universities of Rome in St Peter’s Basilica on October 27, 2025. (Vatican Media)

...tice, and the ability to serve the common good.”

The family, he reaffirms, remains “the first school of humanity,” while collaboration among families, parishes, and schools is essential to form consciences capable of choosing what is right rather than what is merely advantageous. “When the Earth suffers,” he adds, “the poor suffer most,” linking social and environmental justice as inseparable elements of Catholic education.

### A Culture of Encounter

Building on the late Pope Francis’ Global Compact on Education, the letter identifies three priorities for the years ahead:

- *Cultivation of interior life* – responding to young people’s thirst for depth.
- *A humane digital culture* – placing the person before the algorithm.
- *Education for peace* – “unarmed and disarming,” teaching reconciliation and dialogue.

Education, he writes, “is a gentle force that rejects violence,” a language of mercy that builds bridges, not walls.

### Hope for a Fragmented World

Concluding with an appeal to all educators, Pope Leo XIV invites them to “use language that heals,” to keep open hearts, and to face challenges with courage and generosity.

“When education loses sight of the poor,” he warns, “it loses its very soul.”

In *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, the Pope envisions a global educational movement animated by faith, creativity, and compassion—a “symphony of the Spirit” that renews trust, restores humanity, and leads the world once again to hope. **Agencies**

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