The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

Mission Statement

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

TERHAD PP 8460/11/2012 (030939) ISSN: 1394-3294 | Vol: 33 No. 37 | October 18, 2026 www.heraldmalaysia.com

Heal divisions, renew mission



VATICAN: Pope Leo XIV has called on Catholics to confront division within their communities, warning that conflicts, polarisation and mistrust undermine the Church's witness and its mission to proclaim the Gospel.

In his message for the 100th World Mission Day, themed *One in Christ, united in mission*, the Pope urged the whole Church to renew its missionary commitment through reconciliation, cooperation and a love made visible in daily life.

> **Missionary unity should not be understood as uniformity.**

The centenary observance, marking the celebration established by Pope Pius XI in 1926, is an invitation to every baptised person to share responsibility for bringing Christ's love to the world.

"In many situations, we encounter conflicts, polarisation, misunderstandings and a lack of mutual trust," Pope Leo said. "When this occurs even within our communities, it undermines our witness."

The Church's first missionary responsibility, he stressed, is to renew and sustain spiritual and fraternal unity among its members. Evangelisation requires hearts that are reconciled and willing to build communion.

Drawing on Jesus' prayer that His disciples "may all be one", the Pope said unity is essential to the credibility of the Christian message. A reconciled and fraternal community gives the proclamation of the Gospel its full power to reach others.

Such unity begins with a living relationship with Christ, nourished by listening to His Word and receiving the Sacraments. Christ must remain at the centre of every word, action and relationship within the Church.

Being Christian, he explained, is first of all a life in union with Christ. From that relationship flow both communion among believers and the fruitfulness of their mission.

Pope Leo also called for stronger ecumenical efforts among Christian Churches, building on the shared commemoration of the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

He made clear that missionary responsibility belongs to the entire Church, with each person participating according to their vocation and circumstances.

"No baptised person is exempt from, or indifferent to, mission," he said.

That shared calling requires communities to recognise the gifts of others, welcome diversity, bear one another's burdens and overcome factions and poorly coordinated efforts.

> **"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion,"**

"Missionary unity should not be understood as uniformity," the Pope said, describing it instead as different charisms working towards the same purpose: making Christ's love visible and inviting everyone to encounter Him.

He urged Church institutions to develop creative, concrete ways of cooperating, while allowing cultural, spiritual and liturgical differences to find harmonious expression within the same faith.

The Pope thanked the Pontifical Mission Societies for sustaining a worldwide network of prayer and charity, recalling his own experience of their support during his ministry in Peru.

Through missionary formation and practical assistance, the societies connect local communities with the needs of the wider Church. Offerings collected on World Mission Day support those needs, making contributions from the faithful an expression of shared missionary responsibility.

At the heart of this work, Pope Leo said, is God's faithful love, revealed in Jesus Christ and entrusted to the Church to proclaim, live and share.

"If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence," he said.

He expressed particular gratitude to missionaries who leave their homelands, families and security to serve in places marked by poverty, conflict or cultural distance. Their perseverance, despite adversity and human limitations, shows that God's love crosses every barrier.

The world still needs such witnesses, he stressed, appealing for new missionary vocations and prayers for young people and adults willing to leave everything to follow Christ.

He also urged the wider Church to stand alongside missionaries through the witness of their lives, prayer and financial contributions, especially in reaching the poorest and those most in need.

Drawing inspiration from St Francis of Assisi and St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, the Pope invited every Catholic to contribute according to the gifts they have received.

"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion," he said.

He concluded with a prayer that the Church might be united in mission, courageous in bearing witness to the Gospel and faithful in embodying God's love for all creation. Invoking Mary, Queen of Missions, he asked that Christians become instruments of peace throughout the world.

To read the full message, go to: *https://l1nq.com/pnuwtgh*

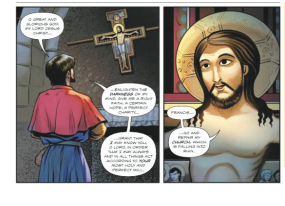
**Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.
We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.**
1 Thessalonians 1:1-2



RGS marks 70 years in Malaysia ■ P5



Forming Catholic leaders for service ■ P10



St Francis inspired new comic book adventures ■ P17

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1994

Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre
5, Jalan Robertson, 50150, KL
Tel / Whatsapp: 03-20268291

Jointly published by the
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,
Diocese of Malacca Johore,
Diocese of Penang and
Diocese of Keningau


EDITOR
Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my


ASSISTANT EDITOR
Sandra Ann Inbaraj
sandra@herald.com.my


JOURNALIST
Christina Lazaroo
christina@herald.com.my


GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my


BAHASA MALAYSIA
Melania Liza Magnus
liza@herald.com.my


MANDARIN
Adelina Wong
chinese@herald.com.my


TAMIL
Perzeus James
tamil@herald.com.my


ADMIN ASSISTANT
Rachael Sharma
admin@herald.com.my

SOCIAL MEDIA
socmed@herald.com.my

ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

Social Media

www.heraldmalaysia.com

@heraldmalaysia

heraldmalaysia
Herald Snapshot

@heraldsnapshot

Disclaimer:

The publication provides a platform for diverse perspectives, and the inclusion of these contributions is intended to encourage dialogue and reflection within the Catholic community. The views and opinions expressed in the articles contributed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy or official stance of HERALD The Catholic Weekly.

Become a voice in the HERALD community

Capture and share the spirit and vibrancy of your parish or ministry life with our readers.
We're looking for concise articles between 400 to 500 words, accompanied by high-resolution photos (300 DPI) in JPG or PNG format.
Don't forget to include captions that bring your images to life.
Your contributions are essential in keeping our faith community connected and informed.
Send your articles to editor1@herald.com.my

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The mission we take home

What will Mission Sunday look like on Monday morning?

The children will still need getting ready. Traffic will still test our patience. There will be deadlines, household chores, and someone needing our attention. For many Catholics, the week ahead will leave little room for another commitment.

Yet mission is already waiting within these familiar responsibilities. The question is whether we recognise it — and whether our faith makes a difference to the way we respond.

Pope Leo XIV's theme for this year's World Mission Day, *One in Christ, united in mission,* brings us back to the source of our calling. Mission begins in our relationship with Christ and grows through communion with others. Every baptised person shares in it, according to their vocation and circumstances.

That includes those of us who describe ourselves as ordinary laity. Our relationships bring us into places where the Church's institutional presence may be limited. At MPC2026, Archbishop Simon Poh reminded delegates that laypeople carry their vocation into offices, classrooms, neighbourhoods and workplaces. People encounter something of Christianity through the way we speak, work, disagree and care.

Bishop Julius Gitom brought this responsibility close to home with a searching question: "Are we really disciples of Christ?" He challenged the habit of saying what the Church should do while leaving the task to someone else. "We are the Church," he reminded delegates. Its mission must become a responsibility each of us embraces, flowing from an encounter with Christ that changes our lives.

Bishop Joseph Hii's candid reflection on his leadership deepened that challenge: self-centredness can prevent us from hearing the needs around us. Mission requires personal conversion.

That is an uncomfortable starting point. We would often prefer a programme to organise or a task to complete. Conversion asks us to examine the person doing the organising.

Can we hear someone without preparing our defence? Can we recognise goodness in a person whose opinions irritate us? Can we admit that a familiar parish practice may leave others feeling excluded?

The convention's call to *Celebrate, Listen and Walk Together* reaches into these questions. Synodality becomes real when we listen prayerfully, take another person's experience seriously, and discern together how to respond.

A parent listening to a teenager's doubts without immediately scolding is helping make room for faith. A BEC member noticing someone's quiet withdrawal can begin a conversation. A ministry leader welcoming a newcomer's contribution can help that person discover a place in the Church.

Such encounters require patience. Distance from the Church may hold disappointment, grief, shame, or an experience of being dismissed. Before offering an answer, we may need to earn the trust that allows the question to be spoken.

Mission also requires moral courage. At work, our witness may mean challenging unfair treatment, refusing a dishonest practice or speaking up when prejudice is passed off as humour. These choices can cost us approval and convenience.

We also need the courage to share Christ: to speak simply about why we pray, what sustains our hope and how faith helps us face difficulty. An invitation to Mass or an offer to pray together can become a gentle opening.

This witness needs nourishment. Prayer, Scripture and the Eucharist help us receive the love we are called to share. They also expose the gap between our convictions and our conduct.

Pope Leo warns that division and mistrust within Christian communities undermine their mission. Parish rivalries, dismissive language and resentment between generations can obscure the very love we hope others will discover. Reconciliation belongs to our missionary responsibility.

Parishes must prepare and trust laypeople to carry the Gospel into daily life. This requires formation for difficult choices, opportunities to use our gifts, and support for those stretched by work and caregiving. The invitation to participate must be matched by a willingness to share responsibility. Exhausted volunteers need relief; overlooked members need genuine opportunities to contribute.

Our concern must also reach beyond our parish. Mission Sunday calls us to pray for missionaries and support communities across the world. Our offerings express solidarity with people whose circumstances we may never personally encounter.

The fruits of MPC2026 will become visible as its spirit enters everyday relationships. Each of us can name one response: someone to hear, someone to accompany, something to change.

On Monday morning, the familiar demands will return. So will opportunities to make Christ's love known.

We will have received Him in the Eucharist. The people we meet will need to recognise something of Him in us.

Patricia Pereira

What belongs to God?

Reflecting on our **Sunday Readings** with Fr Aloysius Tan

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6;
1 Thessalonians 1:1-5;
Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

We often come to God with a list of things we need: strength for the week ahead, healing for someone we love, guidance for a difficult decision, or relief from a worry that will not leave us.

There is nothing wrong with this. We are His children, and He invites us to bring Him our burdens. But today's Gospel gently turns the question around. As we ask what we need from God, we are also invited to consider: What are we giving to Him?

The Pharisees and Herodians approach Jesus with a question about paying taxes to Caesar. Their words sound respectful, but their intention is to trap Him. Whatever answer He gives, they hope to find something they can use against Him.

Jesus asks them to show Him a coin. "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" He asks.

"Caesar's," they reply.

Then comes the answer we know so well: give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God.

We can become so familiar with these words that we stop allowing them to disturb us. We understand that taxes must be paid and responsibilities fulfilled. But what belongs to God?

The coin bears Caesar's image. We bear the image of God.

That is where this Gospel becomes deeply personal. God's claim reaches our whole lives: the person we are at work, the way we behave at home, our use of money, and the attitudes we carry towards others.

We may give God an hour on Sunday while keeping a resentment carefully protected for years. We may offer prayers for peace while refusing to speak to someone in our own family. We may ask Him to guide us, then resist every invitation to change.

These are uncomfortable possibilities because we recognise something of ourselves in them. The Gospel allows us to bring those divided parts of our lives back to God.

In the first reading, God works through Cyrus, a ruler who does not know Him. Through this unexpected instrument, God acts for the sake of His people.

There is consolation here. God can work beyond the boundaries of our expectations. His purposes are not defeated simply because events unfold differently from our plans.

Sometimes we become discouraged because we cannot see how a situation will improve. We have prayed, waited and tried our best. Isaiah reminds us that God sees possibilities we cannot yet recognise. Our task is to remain faithful and attentive, ready to receive help even when it comes through an unexpected person.

But faithfulness needs a visible expression. In the second reading, St Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonians' work of faith, labour of love and steadfastness of hope.

Notice how active these words are.

Faith asks something of us. It calls us to honesty when dishonesty would be easier, and to trust when we cannot control the outcome.

Love requires effort. It is the patient care of a sick spouse, the repeated kindness towards a difficult colleague, the willingness to listen when we are tired.

Hope keeps us faithful through disappointment. It helps us begin again without surrendering to bitterness.

This is how we give God what belongs to Him. We place our ordinary lives at His disposal and allow His grace to shape them.

And we remember that those around us also bear His image. The person who irritates us, the stranger whose circumstances we do not understand, the elderly relative who needs our time: each deserves a response worthy of that dignity.

When we come to Mass, we bring all this to the Lord. With the bread and wine, we can offer our work, our weariness, our unfinished efforts and our need for forgiveness. In the Eucharist, Christ gives Himself to us and strengthens us to give ourselves in love.

Perhaps today we can identify one part of life we have kept firmly under our own control. It may be a wounded relationship, an unhealthy attachment, or a decision we have postponed because we know it will demand courage.

Let us place it before the Lord.

Lord, You have made me in Your image. Help me to live as someone who belongs to You. Give me the grace to love faithfully, serve generously, and trust You with what I find hardest to surrender.

Then let us carry that prayer into the week, through the choices only we can make.

Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

October

5-23	Meeting – *Amoris Laetitia,* Rome
24	Meeting – KL Archdiocesan Pastoral Team
25	Pastoral Visit and Mass – Church of St Theresa, Nilai
26	Meeting – Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Core Team
27	Meeting – College of Consultors
27	Meeting – AOHD Board
27	Meeting (Online) – Council of Priests
28	Clergy Monthly Recollection
29	Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance

Penang Diocese

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

October / November

20	Meeting – Council of Priests, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam at 10.00am
21-22	Clergy Monthly Recollection with Religious – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
25	Confirmation – Church of Risen Christ, Air Itam at 9.00am
26	Meeting – Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Core Team
27/10-1/11	Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference – Office of Social Communications Bishops Meet & 450th Anniversary of Evangelisation of Macau

Malacca Johore Diocese

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

October

20-21	Clergy Monthly Recollection – Good Shepherd Catholic Seminary, Melaka
20	Diaconate Ordination – Gabriel Puvaneswaran Pillai, Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak
24	Mass – 100th Anniversary, Church of St Simon, Labis
25	Confirmation – Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak
26	Meeting – Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Core Team
30	40th Anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace (Assisi 1986-2026) – Church of St Joseph, Plentong
31	Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of St Andrew, Muar

Learning for life, carrying a mission forward



PORT KLANG: From lessons in English and Mathematics to cooking, baking and creative arts, the Life Skills Centre – Port Klang continues a mission of care for the children of Kampung Keretapi, helping them learn skills for both the classroom and everyday life.

Archbishop Julian Leow officially opened and blessed the Centre on September 5, celebrating the continuation of work begun by the Franciscan Missionaries of Divine Motherhood (FMDM) Sisters in the early 1990s.

Formerly known as the Educare Centre, it was established by the Sisters to provide educational support, healthcare and food assistance to families living in the squatter areas of Kampung Keretapi.

Over the years, volunteers, teachers, members of the corporate sector, college students and the parish community helped sustain and develop its educational programmes. Former Educare students also returned to contribute to the work that had supported them.

In 2022, after 32 years of service in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, the FMDM Sisters were missioned to Ipoh and Taiping to continue serving the poor.

Determined to carry the mission forward, the Board members approached Archbishop Julian for his blessing to continue running the Centre. The Life Skills Centre – Port Klang was formed in May that year, maintaining its commitment to basic education, health care and practical skills for the children of Kampung Keretapi.



Today, the Centre serves 22 students aged seven to 16, supported by seven volunteers and four teachers.

Weekday academic classes focus on English, Bahasa Malaysia and Mathematics. On alternate Saturdays, the children take part in life skills sessions covering cooking, baking, creative arts, health care and fitness, alongside outdoor activities and motivational talks supported by various private organisations.

The opening celebration gave the children an opportunity to showcase their talents through performances and an exhibition of their artwork. A slideshow revisited past activities, while lunch brought together those involved in the Centre's work.

Tokens of appreciation were presented to volunteers, teachers and Board members in recognition of their contributions. The celebration concluded with Archbishop Julian blessing the Centre as it continues to serve a new generation of children.

St Francis' witness endures, 800 years on

PENANG: The faith, humility and enduring legacy of St Francis of Assisi brought the Franciscan family and parishioners together at Risen Christ Catholic Church for a solemn prayer service commemorating the 800th anniversary of his death.

Held on the evening of October 3, the annual Transitus service drew about 150 people, including friars from the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) and the Capuchin Franciscans (OFMCap), sisters from the FSIC and FMDM congregations, members of the Secular Franciscan Order and parishioners.

The Transitus, meaning "passing over", recalls St Francis' passage from earthly life to eternal life. Traditionally observed on the eve of his feast, the service invites participants to reflect on his final hours and the trust in God that shaped both his life and his death.

This year's commemoration carried particular significance as the Church marks the eighth centenary of his death in 1226. It also takes place during the special Jubilee Year of St Francis proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV, which runs from January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027. The Jubilee invites the faithful to follow the saint's example of holiness, charity and peace.



The Franciscan family at the feast.

At Risen Christ, prayers and readings tracing the saint's final moments led participants through the last hours of his earthly journey. The service included the Gospel passage from John 13:1–15, the breaking and sharing of bread, and time for reflection on his faith, love and continuing influence on the Church.

St Francis died at the Portiuncula near Assisi, Italy, on October 3, 1226. In a final expression of the poverty he had embraced throughout his life, he asked to be laid on the bare ground and welcomed death as "Sister Death".

His *Canticle of the Creatures,* also known as the *Canticle of the Sun,* praises God through creation, including Brother Sun and Sister Moon. Its final verses also speak of Sister Bodily Death, expressing his trust in God even at the end of life.

For Lynne, a parishioner attending the service for the first time, the commemoration was meaningful and touching. She said it had helped her better understand Franciscan spirituality and the legacy St Francis had entrusted to the Church.

Stephanie Cheong

Bringing Franciscan spirituality into everyday life





Participants gather at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Kota Kinabalu for a prayer vigil with the sacred relic of St Francis of Assisi.

KOTA KINABALU: The call to live with humility, love and joyful service brought members of the Franciscan family together for the Sabah Franciscan Conference 2026, a three-day gathering centred on prayer, the Eucharist, fraternity and formation.

Held September 17–19 to mark the 800th anniversary of St Francis of Assisi's death, the conference invited participants to draw on his example as they respond to the challenges of contemporary life.

Organised by the Sabah Franciscan Conference 2026 Organising Committee as part of the Franciscan Jubilee Year, it carried the theme, *Walk Humbly, Love Deeply, Serve Joyfully.*

The anniversary offered an opportunity to consider how the saint's Gospel-centred life could inspire a renewed commitment to faith and service. His concern for others and care for Creation provided a common thread through the gathering, linking prayer with the responsibilities of daily life.

The programme opened with Mass at the Church of St Michael, Penampang, on the Feast of the Stigmata of St Francis of Assisi. A relic of the saint, brought from Rome for the conference, was also present.

The celebration invited the faithful to reflect on St Francis' profound union with the crucified Christ and their own relationship with the Lord. It set the spiritual direction for the gathering: a deeper encounter with Christ that finds expression in the way people live, love and serve.

On the second evening, participants gathered at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Kota Kinabalu, a prayer vigil marked by silence, reflection and communal prayer, with the relic again present.

The final day featured formation sessions led by Friar Moses Yap OFM and Friar Gerald Terence OFM, exploring the continuing relevance of St Francis and the practical expression of his spirituality.

In *Why Francis Still Matters After 800 Years,* Friar Moses highlighted the saint's enduring witness in a world often driven by power, wealth and recognition. His example, he said, continues to call the faithful towards simplicity, humility, fraternity and care for Creation.

These values bring the Franciscan message close to contemporary concerns: the pressure to accumulate possessions, the desire for recognition and the need to care for a world shared with others. St Francis' life offers a different measure of fulfilment, rooted in trust in God and loving relationships.

Speaking on *Franciscan Spirituality for the Modern World,* Friar Gerald traced St Francis' vocation to his encounter with Christ through the Gospel. That encounter shaped his love for others, commitment to peace, life of fraternity and care for Creation.

He explained that the stigmata expressed the saint's deep union with Christ in his suffering and sacrifice on the Cross. St Francis placed Christ at the centre of his life, surrendering the pursuit of personal glory.

Friar Gerald encouraged participants to bring this spirituality into their families, workplaces, parishes and wider society. The call to Gospel living extends into ordinary responsibilities and relationships, where humility, patience and generosity can shape a person's response to others.

He also emphasised attentive listening to God, including through everyday experiences and encounters with others. Such listening invites openness to what God may be asking in one's life circumstances and a willingness to respond in faith.

Secular Franciscans, in particular, were reminded of their vocation to live the Gospel amid the responsibilities of daily life. Their witness forms part of the wider Franciscan family, whose diverse ministries and ways of life are united by the spirituality of St Francis.

Fraternity gives this shared calling a practical expression. Walking together involves offering support, receiving one another's gifts and making room for those who need care. In this spirit, service becomes a response of love, sustained by prayer and the Eucharist.

The conference concluded with Mass presided over by Archbishop John Wong, sending participants back to their communities and ministries with a renewed commitment to put their learning into practice.

The message running through the gathering was clear: the Gospel is proclaimed through relationships, choices and acts of service as well as words. The invitation to walk humbly, love deeply and serve joyfully continues in the patience shown at home, the care offered to a neighbour and the willingness to serve without seeking recognition. Through such everyday choices, St Francis' witness can continue to bear fruit today.

Rebuild the Church by living the Gospel



Parishioners carry the statue of St Francis of Assisi to lead the procession.

CHERAS: The call to missionary discipleship, radical obedience, and conversion was at the heart of the Feast of St Francis of Assisi celebration at the Church of St Francis of Assisi, October 4.

The celebration concluded a nine-day novena themed *Rebuild My Church: From Gospel to Life,* preached by Fr Victor Prakash OFMCap from India.

Beginning on September 26, the novena guided the community through listening to Christ, conversion of heart, Gospel living, fraternity, solidarity with the poor and marginalised, simplicity, care for Creation, and peace and reconciliation. It culminated in the call to missionary discipleship.

In his homily, Fr Victor reflected on Christ's command to make disciples of all nations and His promise to remain with them until the end of the age.

Discipleship, he said, demanded a willingness to leave behind livelihoods, possessions and personal ambitions to follow Christ.

"This radical obedience, moving from the comfort zone, is very important for us to learn from St Francis of Assisi," he said.

He encouraged the faithful to embrace challenging missions with trust in God's providence, highlighting the readiness of those in religious life to accept assignments from their superiors.

Drawing on St Bonaventure's account, Fr Victor recalled Francis' discernment between a life devoted to contemplation and one of active preaching. Francis sought the prayerful counsel of Brother Sylvester and St Clare, who both discerned that he should go out and preach.

His proclamation, however, was inseparable from the life he led.

"Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words only when it is necessary," Fr Victor said, emphasising the importance of putting faith into practice.

While Franciscan accounts record miracles associated with the saint's ministry, Fr Victor said Francis' concern was to follow Christ faithfully.

"He was a miracle by following Christ in his life," he said.

He also recalled how Francis forgot a prepared sermon before addressing the Pope and cardinals. Humbly acknowledging this and invoking the Holy Spirit, he spoke in a way that moved his listeners.

Fr Victor urged Christians to keep Francis' spirit alive through service, forgiveness, care for creation and concern for those who are forgotten.

"Let us inherit his radical obedience. Let us dare to step out to the crossroads and sickbeds of our modern world," he said.

In his pastoral remarks at the end of Mass, Archbishop Julian Leow connected the call to rebuild the Church with the responsibilities of everyday life.

"Conversion begins with us, with me," he said, explaining that personal renewal must extend to the family, Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC), parish and wider society.

Each person, he added, has responsibilities as a son or daughter, parent, priest, religious or bishop. Neglecting these affects the wider community.

Describing the family as the domestic Church, Archbishop Julian highlighted pastoral concerns surrounding later marriages, young people remaining single and the needs of the elderly.

He encouraged continued reflection on *Amoris Laetitia,* Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on love in the family, in its 10th anniversary year, and prayers for Church leaders gathering in Rome to consider how to proclaim the Gospel to families today.

He also highlighted the Christian Federation of Malaysia's ecumenical engagement, including an upcoming study programme in Germany with the Lutheran Church.

Reflecting on the Malaysia Pastoral Convention in Sibu, Archbishop Julian said the Malaysian Church had come together as one and was now called to walk together in mission.

He echoed Pope Leo XIV's encouragement to the Diocese of Rome to "do less and do it better", stressing the need for fruitful pastoral activity.

The celebration also marked parish priest Fr Paul Cheong OFMCap's 33rd anniversary of priestly ordination and the 12th anniversary of Archbishop Julian's episcopal ordination.

Both cut anniversary cakes with the parish community before joining the faithful for a fellowship lunch.

The feast concluded with a renewed call to live the Gospel not merely through words but through lives marked by humility, courage, service and missionary commitment – echoing St Francis' call to rebuild the Church. **Sandra Ann**

Seventy years of shepherding with love

Tianne Pereira



KUALA LUMPUR: For the Good Shepherd Sisters, 70 years in Malaysia is measured in lives touched, dignity restored and hope rekindled. Their anniversary celebration gave thanks for that legacy while renewing the call to seek out those who need care today.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (commonly known as the Good Shepherd Sisters) gathered at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist on October 3 under the theme *Rooted in Gratitude, Renewed in Mission.*

Archbishop Julian Leow presided at the Eucharistic celebration. Concelebrants included Frs Joseph Stephen, CSsR, Joseph Lee, Robert Kham, Gilbert James OFMCap, Benedetto Benno OFMCap and Diego Viktorianus OFMCap with Deacon Tony Bingkuan OFMCap assisting. Over 25 Good Shepherd Sisters attended, alongside other religious, benefactors, volunteers and friends.

The Sisters represented different seasons of the mission, united by their choice to follow Christ, the Good Shepherd, and accompany people whose suffering can too easily go unnoticed.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian asked two searching questions: "What are we celebrating? Why are we here?"

The answer was gratitude. Recalling a musical play organised by the Sisters some years ago, he reminded the congregation that "gratitude is the memory of the heart". The anniversary was an opportunity to remember God's faithfulness and everyone who had helped sustain the mission.

Gratitude also called for renewed reflection on purpose. Whatever one's vocation — religious life, marriage, priesthood or another calling — discernment must continue throughout life.

"What is God asking of me today?" he asked.

Drawing on his recent clergy retreat, Archbishop Julian reflected on how religious charisms emerge in response to the cries of their time. The Good Shepherd mission responds particularly to vulnerable and marginalised women and girls, including those experiencing poverty, violence, trafficking, exploitation and isolation.

In Malaysia, the Sisters have served through education, welfare, protection, empowerment and accompaniment, upholding the dignity of each person.

The Gospel account of the shepherd searching for the lost sheep offered a challenge for the years ahead. The shepherd goes looking. Likewise, the Sisters were invited to discern the needs they had not yet recognised and the cries they had not yet heard.

Archbishop Julian pointed to the loneliness that persists despite unprecedented technological connectivity. People can communicate instantly across the world yet struggle to connect with those beside them, even within their homes and communities.

Mental health struggles, depression, isolation and the need for genuine companionship demand attentive pastoral responses.

"If companionship is needed," he said, "we need to seek them out and not wait for them to come to us."

He called for a Church that listens, journeys and responds together. Religious communities, parishes, BECs and ministries all have a role in discerning and addressing society's needs. Seventy years of service, therefore, opens into a mission that continues.

Following the Eucharistic celebration, local community leader Sr Grace Chia thanked Archbishop Julian, the concelebrating priests, organisers, volunteers, liturgical teams, benefactors and mission partners. She expressed special appreciation to cathedral parish priest Fr Gerard Theraviam and parish secretary Sangeeta for their support and guidance.

A video presentation recalled the invitation that brought the pioneering Sisters to Malaysia in 1956. From their beginnings in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, the mission expanded to other parts of the country, responding to the needs of women, girls and families.

Their work remains rooted in the conviction of their foundress, St Mary Euphrasia: "One person is of more value than the whole world." This belief gives the anniversary its deepest meaning: each person accompanied, protected and helped to rebuild her life matters.

Archbishop Julian also gave the Sisters a special blessing and invited young women drawn to protecting the innocent and vulnerable to consider the Good Shepherd vocation. Their mission offers an opportunity to make a difference through compassionate service to those most in need.

The celebration continued over lunch, as Sisters, clergy, religious and friends shared food, stories and memories. Their fellowship reflected the many people who have walked alongside the Sisters and helped carry the mission forward.

As a new chapter begins, St Mary Euphrasia's words remain an encouragement: "Nothing is impossible to one who loves." Seventy years of service have shown how that love takes shape — one person at a time.

● *See also page 12*

A harvest of sweet or sour grapes?

IPOH: The 10-year-old children from both the Chinese and English-speaking Catechism classes at the Church of St Michael received their First Holy Communion on October 4 during a bilingual Mass celebrated by Msgr Stephen Liew.

Having reached this important milestone in their journey of faith, the children looked angelic in their white attire, symbolising their innocence and readiness to receive the Lord. They were filled with excitement and anticipation as they prepared to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the first time.

On this 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the first reading, taken from Isaiah 5:1–7, presented the image of Israel and Judah as a well-tended vineyard. God had prepared the soil, planted good vines and cared for them lovingly, yet the vineyard produced wild and sour grapes instead of good fruit. Despite all that God had done for His people, they failed to respond with the fruits of justice and righteousness.

The Gospel reading from Matthew presented a similar image in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. The tenants of the vineyard forgot that they were merely caretakers. When the owner sent his servants to collect the produce, they mistreated and beat them. Eventually, they even killed the owner's son. They behaved as though they were the owners of the vineyard rather than its entrusted stewards.

In his homily, Msgr Stephen likened the vineyard to the Church and to our life of discipleship. He reminded us that we are all stewards of God's vineyard. Everything we have comes from God, including our abilities and talents. God is the true owner; we are called to use what He has entrusted to us responsibly and generously.

This image of the vineyard can be seen in many of our relationships — as parents with children, teachers with students and parish priests with parishioners. In each relationship, the former are not owners but stewards, entrusted with the care and formation of the latter.



Msgr Stephen reminded the congregation that in the Lord's vineyard on earth, we should not be working solely for our own selfish needs, personal success or achievements. If we do so, we risk producing 'sour grapes'. Instead, we should ask ourselves: How can I use the gifts God has given me for the good of others and the community? How can my life attract others and draw them closer to God?

Parents, teachers and priests who live good and faithful lives naturally draw people towards them. Their lives bear good fruit and become a blessing to others.

Looking at the little "angels" dressed in white, Msgr Stephen concluded with a thought-provoking reminder:

"Whether these children bear sour grapes or sweet grapes will depend on their teachers, parents and priests. This is our challenge."

Our prayer: As these young children receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time, may they continue to grow in faith, love and holiness, nurtured by their families, teachers and the parish community. May their lives bear abundant and lasting fruit in the Lord's vineyard. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Jennifer Duarte

New homes, new roots



SHAH ALAM: What do potted plants, wagging tails, curious cats and a church community have in common? Quite a lot, as we discovered during our *Plant Swap and Gift* and *Pet Adoption* weekend on September 26–27.

Organised by the Care for Creation ministry of the Church of the Divine Mercy, the weekend brought together two simple ideas with one purpose: to remind us that caring for creation means caring for all living things around us.

Parishioners arrived with plants to share and went home with something new to nurture. Some brought familiar favourites; others discovered new green additions for their homes. By the end of the weekend, approximately 150 plants had changed hands.

There was no buying or selling — just sharing. Plants that had outgrown one home found space in another, while extra cuttings were passed on instead of discarded. Caring for our common home does not always require grand gestures. Sometimes, it begins with sharing a plant.

And then there were the four-legged visitors!

Our pet adoption partner, *Pawtarian,* brought around 20 animals looking for loving homes. They attracted plenty of attention from parishioners young and old, with cuddles, curious introductions and some very happy endings.

Five puppies and three kittens left with new families. Eight adoptions may sound like a small number, but to those animals — and the families who welcomed them — it meant everything.

Bringing plant sharing and pet adoption together was intentional. Creation is also closer to home — in the plants we nurture, the animals we protect and our everyday choices about how we treat the living world.

The weekend was a joyful reminder that caring for creation can be simple, practical and fun. We can reuse instead of discard, share what we have, nurture something that grows, give an animal a second chance and encourage others to do the same.

One plant. One puppy. One kitten. One small act of care at a time.

And sometimes, that is exactly how change begins.



An ancient letter, a continuing journey of faith

KLANG: A nine-week study of St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians encouraged parishioners of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) to deepen their relationship with Christ and put their faith into practice at home, at work and in the wider community.

Organised by the parish Formation Team, the programme brought together close to 50 participants, including many new faces, for weekly sessions of Scripture study, reflection and fellowship. It was held every Thursday from July 30 to September 24.

Fr Michael Idoko opened the programme with an introduction to the history of Ephesus and its culture of idolatry, explaining how St Paul's presence and ministry helped conversion take root.

"St Paul did not begin with a letter. He began with presence, with relationships and teachings," he said.

Fr Michael explained that St Paul appealed first to the mind, then to the heart, with the resulting transformation reaching into homes and society.

"Lasting social renewal begins with personal spiritual conversion," he reminded participants.

The remaining sessions drew on Jeff Cavins' video series, *Ephesians: Discover Your Inheritance.* Participants explored how the letter moves from belief and teaching in its first three chapters to the practical demands of Christian living from Chapter Four onwards.



Group sharing during the Bible class.

As the weeks progressed, the study became a personal examination of how faith shapes everyday choices and relationships. Group sharing provided opportunities to reflect on lived experiences, encourage one another and consider how to practise what they professed to believe.

For participant Devadass, the study reinforced both perseverance in faith and unity within the Church.

"The study of Ephesians reminded me of the importance of remaining steadfast in faith, especially in the challenging times we live in. It also reminded me that we are not on this journey alone — we are the one Body of Christ, called to remain united in one faith, supporting and strengthening one another."

Julia found that the lessons extended into her family life and workplace.

"The Ephesians Bible study taught me to apply God's Word in my daily life. I learnt to love, forgive, communicate with patience, and treat others with kindness. It has strengthened my family relationships, workplace attitude, faith, and dependence on God."

Parish priest Fr Gregory Chan encouraged participants to follow St Paul's example by living "a life worthy of our calling in Christ".

The final session concluded with many participants eager for further opportunities to study Scripture and deepen their faith. Although the nine-week programme has ended, St Paul's letter, written almost 2,000 years ago, continues to invite them to let God's Word shape their daily lives. The journey of faith, conversion and discipleship continues — together. **OLL Formation Team**

A haven of hope for rescued dogs

PENANG: The drive up to the beautiful Balik Pulau home of Veronica Ann and Roger Mair is inconspicuous: a narrow road, barely wide enough for a car, winds past other homes and a Chinese temple. Only upon entering the residence does the full significance of their work become clear. For the past six years, their home has also been home to about 150 adorable – and loud – rescue dogs.

On September 19, Fr Raymond Raj and Deacon Andrew Loh, together with Fr Anthony Liew, who happened to be visiting CHS, led 30 dog-loving parishioners from the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on a visit to Haven Balik Pulau, a sanctuary for dogs. In the spirit of *Laudato Si',* we celebrated the gift of God's creation by connecting and playing with about 150 furry friends. We began the morning by gathering for prayer at the Cathedral before making our way there with excitement and enthusiasm.

At Haven Balik Pulau, Veronica and Roger greeted us with open arms and shared the story of their mission. The inspiring sanctuary occupies one acre of renovated, well-kept land, a testament to their dedication to the dogs' welfare. They rely mainly on their own savings, supplemented by donations from dog-loving members of the public, to sustain this sanctuary. Parishioners from the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit also contributed about one tonne of rice, together with dog food and toys, much of which was distributed to Haven Balik Pulau and other dog shelters in need across Penang.

Every rescued dog is spayed or neutered, well fed and generally well cared for. The dogs have free run of about a third of the compound, although a few are allowed to roam throughout the entire property. Despite the racket they made when we arrived, they proved to be all bark and no bite. We spent the morning petting and befriending canines of different sizes, shapes and colours. Among them were several disabled and paraplegic dogs, most of which appeared to have no difficulty keeping up with the others – no doubt because of Roger and Veronica's devoted care.

Finally, our generous hosts gave us a tour of their beautifully decorated house, which also operates as a homestay offering clean, homey rooms available to the public. After the tour, Roger graciously shared what had inspired him to undertake this mission. We left near noon after a closing prayer, grateful for the experience, the compassion shown by God's children and the beauty of God's creatures. Those who wish to support Haven Balik Pulau may contact Roger at *haveninbalikpulau@gmail.com.* **Emma Jillian Goon**



Parishioners of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit at Haven Balik Pulau, a sanctuary for dogs.



With Mary, growing in humility and love

Maria Yeap

PENANG: Heavy rain changed the venue but not the spirit of prayer as parishioners of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit gathered on October 1 to celebrate the Feast of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus and begin the Month of the Rosary.

Mass, originally planned at the grotto, was moved into the church, where the congregation came together in thanksgiving.

In his homily, Fr Raymond Raj reflected on humility as the path to greatness in God's eyes. Drawing on Jesus' invitation to become like little children, he explained that being childlike means remaining teachable, open and willing to learn.

A humble person, he said, does not need to prove their importance. Instead, they are ready to listen, apologise, give thanks, serve and bless others.

Quoting St Bernard of Clairvaux — "The measure of love is to love without measure" — Fr Raymond encouraged the faithful to love generously and follow Mary's example. Her humility enabled her to say "yes" to God, and Christians are likewise called to respond willingly to His mission.

Praying the Rosary, he added, should inspire the faithful to bring Jesus to others through their words and actions, with Mary's help.

The rain eased in time for the Rosary procession after Mass. Altar servers led the way around the cathedral grounds, while women scattered flower petals as prayers were recited in English, Mandarin, Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia.

The clergy and approximately 300 parishioners accompanied the statue of Mother Mary in a shared expression of faith and devotion. The procession concluded at the grotto with the singing of *Salve Regina*.



Fr Raymond Raj invites parishioners to reflect on and appreciate Mary's vital place in God's plan of salvation.

Before the congregation dispersed, Fr Raymond invited everyone to pause and reflect on the wonder of God choosing Mary to be the mother of His Son. Sharing his own sense of awe, he encouraged the faithful to appreciate her unique place in God's plan.

The evening renewed the invitation to grow in humility, love without measure and, like Mary, say "yes" to God.

Mother Mary, pray with us and for us.

Walking the 'little way' with St Thérèse

NILAI: Small acts of love can lead to holiness — a message that shaped the Church of St Theresa's celebration of its 91st parish feast, inspired by the "little way" of its patron, St Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Prayer, preaching, a candlelit procession and fellowship brought parishioners and pilgrims together to reflect on how the beloved Little Flower's example could guide their daily lives.

The celebration on October 1, the saint's liturgical feast, included the launch of Mission Month in collaboration with the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) and AMNEC, marking the centenary of World Mission Sunday.

Fr Andrew Manickam presided at Mass, concelebrating with Fr Albet Arockiasamy, Fr Edwin Peter and parish priest, Fr Christopher Wilvaraj.

Preaching in English and Bahasa Malaysia respectively, Fr Andrew and Fr Albet reflected on St Thérèse's "little way" and her ability to respond to suffering with love, even finding the strength to smile through pain.



Fr James Pitchay incenses the statue of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus at the beginning of the Mass on October 2.

They also highlighted the Doctor of the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, encouraging the faithful to seek Mary's intercession as St Thérèse had done.

On October 2, Fr James Pitchay used engaging slides and humour to deliver a homily in English, Bahasa Malaysia and Tamil. Reflecting on St Thérèse's witness of love, he challenged the faithful to recognise how seldom they truly listen.

The main feast celebration on October 3 drew pilgrims from across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, filling the church to overflowing.

Presiding at Mass, Fr James again used light-hearted humour to invite reflection, observing that people could become more absorbed in reality television than in pursuing holiness.

"We often replace God with our distractions, while we should be imitating God and His holiness like St Therese," he said.

After Mass, the faithful joined a procession along a route of approximately 1.5km through Nilai. The Blessed Sacrament was borne on a decorated vehicle, while the statue of St Thérèse was carried by groups of four bearers, who took turns after each decade of the Rosary.

Hundreds of flickering candles lit the streets as the community prayed together, offering a public witness of faith and devotion.

To mark the parish's 91st feast celebration, 91 roses were distributed to bystanders watching the procession — a simple gesture of sharing the joy of the occasion with the wider community.

Each day ended with fellowship over home-cooked and catered meals. Parishioners' contributions and the efforts of those who prepared the celebrations gave practical expression to the "little way": serving one another through small acts of care and generosity. **Jennifer Peter**

Mission Month links prayer with personal outreach

NILAI: Catholics were encouraged to support the Church's mission through prayer, acts of kindness and personal accompaniment at the launch of Mission Month at St Theresa's Church on October 1.

Close to 300 faithful from parishes across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur attended the evening gathering, which also celebrated the Feast of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, patroness of missions.



The event was organised jointly by the parish, the Pontifical Mission Societies and the Archdiocesan Mission of New Evangelisation for Christ (AMNEC).

The programme began at 7.00pm with a procession led by a young person carrying a large Mission Rosary. Two flower girls carried baskets of Mission Rosaries for distribution to participants, while five others, including 94-year-old David, carried coloured heart-shaped cards representing different regions of the world.

The cards were green for Africa, red for the Americas, white for Europe, blue for Oceania and yellow for Asia. Upon reaching the altar, the participants placed them in potted plants.

The symbols highlighted the call to missionary discipleship: the plants represented mission growing from small seeds, the hearts recalled St Thérèse's understanding of love at the heart of the Church's mission, and the five colours expressed prayer embracing the whole world.

The launch also highlighted St Paul VI's teaching in *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* paragraph 14, that evangelisation lies at the heart of the Church's identity.

Following the launch of the Mission Rosary e-booklet, participants prayed the Rosary in English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin and Tamil, followed by a novena to St Thérèse.

The faithful were invited to become AMNEC Prayer Evangelisers, following the example of St Thérèse, who supported missionary work through prayer, love and sacrifice. The initiative will collaborate with the Archdiocesan Prayer Ministry to pray for the world and the Church in Malaysia.

Prayer Evangelisers were also invited to gather at the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Brickfields, on October 16 to pray for people and the mission.

AMNEC members also distributed the Mission Passbook, encouraging participants to accompany "one person" throughout October. In the first week, they are invited to pray for that person; in the second, to express Christ's love through an act of kindness; and in the third, to walk alongside and encourage them.

The fourth week invites participants to offer that person an opportunity to join the AMNEC-CCO Faith Series, attend Mass, participate in a parish or Basic Ecclesial Community activity, or explore the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The evening concluded with fellowship over food and conversation. Fiorentina Anne, from the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang, welcomed the opportunity to connect with others seeking a deeper relationship with Christ.

"It was a great time to join and also meet others who are in search of knowing Christ more deeply," she said.

Those interested in becoming AMNEC Prayer Evangelisers may call 012-331 3997.

Called to mission with childlike trust

IPOH: Childlike love, humility and openness to others can help Christians grow in their mission and bring the light of faith into everyday encounters, said Fr Dr Earl Alan Cura, CICM.

Preaching at the second triduum Mass ahead of the Church of St Michael's 136th feast-day celebration on October 3, Fr Cura invited the faithful to approach their calling with trust in God and a willingness to step beyond familiar surroundings.

The parish celebration carried the theme, "With St Michael, we grow in sanctification, mission and community," with the second day focusing on glowing through mission.

Fr Cura, a priest of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, linked the Church's mission with spiritual childhood and the loving protection of Guardian Angels. He encouraged the faithful to embrace the enthusiasm of children when meeting others, approaching each person with gentleness and acceptance.

Drawing on his experience as a missionary, he recalled having to begin learning anew — discovering unfamiliar languages and cultures, and learning to walk alongside people he did not know.

"Of course, not all of us are called to this, but that doesn't mean we are not called to mission," he said. "Simply consider your calling, and do it."

God often works through humble people whose ordinary lives may attract little attention, he explained, pointing to St Thérèse of Lisieux as an example.

"St Therese did normal things, in everyday life with greater love, to show others they mattered," he said.

Mission therefore calls Christians to leave their comfort zones, encounter people in unfamiliar situations and recognise the gifts they bring. The Church invites the faithful to be open and non-judgemental, appreciating others' talents rather than allowing differences to become barriers.

Such openness can be difficult, especially when relationships are challenging. Fr Cura stressed that the strength to remain present, respectful and loving comes from a deep trust in God.

Jesus sent His disciples out to meet others, he recalled. Their mission required them to move beyond reliance on themselves and trust the One who had called them.

That same trust can help the faithful face fear, uncertainty, rejection and hostility. The assurance of God's love and the companionship of His angels give them courage to persevere.

Ultimately, Fr Cura reminded the congregation that the mission belongs to God. Christians undertake it trusting that the Father holds them and His holy angels guard their steps.



St Michael's Chapel: 85 years of faith and renewal

IPOH: Generations of faith, education and service were remembered as the Michaelian Catholic Community (MCC) gathered for Mass to honour St Michael the Archangel, patron saint of St Michael's Institution, and celebrate the 85th anniversary of its chapel.

Held on September 26, ahead of the patron saint's feast day on September 29, the evening celebration brought together students, educators, alumni and friends of the institution in prayer and thanksgiving. Mass was celebrated by former student Fr Michael Cheah.

The readings invited reflection on courage and faithfulness amid life's challenges. The account of Michael and his angels overcoming the dragon recalled God's victory over evil, while the psalm response, "In the presence of the angels I will bless You, O Lord", encouraged the community to praise and trust in God.

Joining the celebration were Bro Andrew Loke FSC, Brother Director of the De La Salle Brothers of Malaysia; Bro Carlo Rementilla FSC; and Isaac Stephen Anthony, Director of the De La Salle Centre.

Also present were representatives of Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad and the Board of Governors, together with Old Michaelian Association president Michael Lee Onn Hean and secretary Anthony Lourdes.

The school was represented by Marcus Ooi Kean Giap, Senior Assistant of Administration, and MCC teacher advisors Veronica Komathi and Gerald Selvaraj. Also present was Brindes Lawrence, a former MCC teacher adviser and heritage teacher adviser at St Michael's Institution.

The anniversary also recalled the chapel's passage through wartime occupation, deterioration and restoration.

Founded in 1912, St Michael's Institution grew from modest beginnings into one of Ipoh's recognisable architectural landmarks. An extension undertaken between 1938 and 1941 under Brother Patrick O'Donovan incorporated the chapel, giving it a lasting place in the school's life.

During the Japanese Occupation, the institution was commandeered for use as the headquarters of the Japanese administration in Perak. The chapel became a council chamber, while classrooms and other spaces were converted into offices and facilities for the occupying authorities.

After the war, the La Salle Brothers returned to restore the premises, and classes resumed on September 24, 1945.

In later years, deterioration and a serious termite infestation left the chapel unsafe for use. Restoration made it safe for worship again, and it reopened on September 24, 2011, with Mass celebrated by Fr Michael Cheah.

The following year, Bishop Sebastian Francis, now cardinal, celebrated Mass to mark the institution's centenary.

The institution's alumni include the late Archbishop Gregory Yong, who served as Bishop of Penang before becoming Archbishop of Singapore, and Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam of Kuala Lumpur.

Fr Michael's return to celebrate this year's anniversary linked the gathering with the chapel's restoration and continuing role as a place of prayer. The celebration strengthened the bonds between the school, its alumni and the wider Lasallian family, while giving thanks for those whose faith and dedication had preserved this cherished part of Michaelian life. **Madelene Norris**



Fr Michael Cheah with the MCC committee members and teacher advisors.



Catholics urged to turn faith into public action

JAKARTA: Catholics in Indonesia have been urged to defend human rights, promote transparency in public policy and participate actively in society, with Church and civil society leaders stressing that faith must shape life beyond worship.

The appeal came during a public dialogue organised by the Indonesian Catholic Community Forum (FMKI), in cooperation with Indonesia's Ministry of Human Rights, on October 4.

About 180 participants gathered at St John Paul II Parish in Brayut, Sleman, in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, according to the Archdiocese of Semarang. They included representatives of Catholic organisations, youth groups and parish communities, alongside academics and community leaders.

Parish priest, Fr Benediktus Hanjar Krisnawan, called on Catholics to deepen their understanding of the law, remain attentive to society's needs and speak the truth responsibly.

Mathias Sumardi, chairman of FMKI in Sleman, said the forum provided a shared space for Catholic organisations, parish commissions and other groups to strengthen communication and cooperation towards a peaceful and sustainable society.

Petrus Doni Karno, a member of the human rights minister's expert staff, said human rights belong to every person by virtue of their humanity and dignity as someone created by God.

Protecting these rights, he stressed, requires both government action and public participation. He urged greater attention to equality and justice, particularly for persons with disabilities, women, children and older people.

Karno also outlined community programmes promoting reconciliation, peace and human rights awareness, emphasising that respect for rights must be reflected in everyday relationships.

Agustinus Subarsono, a political economy and public policy expert at Gadjah Mada University, said transparency, justice and sustainability should guide policymaking.

Communities must have opportunities to understand how decisions are made, while policymakers should consider people's circumstances, especially those of vulnerable groups. Policies should draw on evidence and experience, with attention to their consequences for future generations.

He added that citizens, civil society organisations and the media should monitor policies throughout their formulation, implementation and evaluation.



Petrus Doni Karno, an expert adviser to Indonesia's human rights minister on public communication dissemination, addresses participants during a public dialogue on human rights and public policy in Sleman Regency on October 4, 2026. Photo by Archdiocese of Semarang

Human rights advocate Romanus Ndau Lendong, director of the Institute for Information and Democracy Studies, highlighted the public's right to information. Accurate, accountable information, he said, helps people understand public issues, builds trust and enables responsible participation.

At the closing session, Fr Rosarius Sapto Nugroho, chairman of the PK3 Commission of the West Yogyakarta Vicariate, encouraged Catholic communities in West and East Yogyakarta to strengthen relationships with government, local legislatures and civil society organisations.

The archdiocese said such cooperation could help Catholics contribute to a just, dignified and sustainable society, advancing the bonum commune, or common good. **LiCAS News**

YOUCAT offers a roadmap to lasting love

ROME: *YOUCAT Love Forever* aims to help young people explore love, relationships and marriage through the Catholic faith, offering practical guidance on the journey towards lifelong commitment.

Presented in Rome on October 6, the book carries a foreword by Pope Leo XIV. It is a separate volume in the *YOUCAT* series, whose original youth catechism was published in 2011.

Using *YOUCAT's* familiar question-and-answer format, the book accompanies readers through single life, relationships, marriage and sexuality. It addresses over 200 questions, including how to recognise an unhealthy relationship, what makes a strong Christian marriage and why couples should marry in church.

Drawing on Church documents such as *Familiaris Consortio, Deus Caritas Est* and *Amoris Laetitia,* it presents Catholic teaching in language accessible to young adults.

Archbishop John Joseph Kennedy, secretary of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, described the book as a roadmap to help young people grow in faith and make important life decisions.



"YOUCAT: Love Forever" was presented in Rome, Photo Credit: Ignatius Press / www.ignatius.com)

He celebrated Mass at Rome's San Lorenzo Centre before joining the presentation, organised by the YOUCAT Foundation.

Archbishop Kennedy said young people remain open to listening and are interested in the Catholic faith. The Church, he explained, recognises their desire to love and seeks to help them understand and fulfil it.

"The Church is saying that your desire to love is something true, something real, that it comes from God, and that God wants you to fulfil it according to His plan," he said.

He encouraged young Catholics to ask questions, including difficult ones, and use the book to explore their vocation to love.

In his foreword, Pope Leo describes enduring love as a deep commitment, a journey and a lifelong covenant. Mutual trust, generous self-giving and forgiveness help relationships grow, reflecting Christ's love for His Church.

He invites young people to consider: "How can I love as Christ loved?"

The Pope presents the book as preparation for a lifelong "yes", encouraging readers to embrace the depth of love with faith and courage. Such love, he explains, grows through God's grace and the daily effort to seek another person's good.

Speaking to *Vatican News,* Meuser said requests for a book on love and sexuality began soon after the original *YOUCAT* appeared.

"What should we do next? The most important suggestion people gave was to do something about love and sexuality. That is the greatest need," he recalled.

Developing the project required careful consideration of differing views across cultures on sexuality and moral questions. Pope Francis' call for a marriage catechumenate — a sustained journey of preparation and accompaniment for marriage — gave the work renewed impetus.

In 2016, the team began gathering questions and testimonies from over 30 countries. Couples, single people, psychologists, clergy, religious and theologians contributed their experiences and concerns.

These responses helped shape a handbook grounded in the questions young people encounter. Meuser challenged the widespread understanding of love as a feeling that lasts only while emotions remain strong, explaining that this falls short of the Christian understanding.

He described the book as a modest contribution to a much larger task: inviting young people to discover and pursue the Christian ideal of love.

For Archbishop Kennedy, its central message was simple: "You were created for love." **Vatican News**

Thai bishops set seven pastoral priorities towards 2033

BANGKOK: The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand has outlined seven pastoral priorities towards 2033, calling for a Church shaped by listening, accountability, protection of the vulnerable and service to society.

Signed on October 1 by conference president Archbishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana, the framework guides the Thai Church's preparations to commemorate two millennia of Christ's redemption.

It calls on clergy, consecrated persons and laypeople to foster a "culture of synodality" rooted in listening, transparency and social responsibility.

"The Catholic Church cannot remain still amidst the rapid changes in global and Thai society," the bishops said.

The agenda encourages closer cooperation among dioceses, religious congregations and educational institutions, with greater participation by laypeople, women and young people in the Church's mission.

Synodality is the first priority, inviting Catholics to listen to the Holy Spirit and one another, bridge differences and contribute to peace in Thai society.

The framework also calls for operational and financial accountability in dioceses, parishes and schools. Its safeguarding provisions include safe environments, codes of conduct and accessible reporting mechanisms to protect minors and other vulnerable people from abuse of power.

The defence of human dignity at every stage of life is another focus, with particular attention to young people, older persons, migrants, prisoners and those living in poverty.

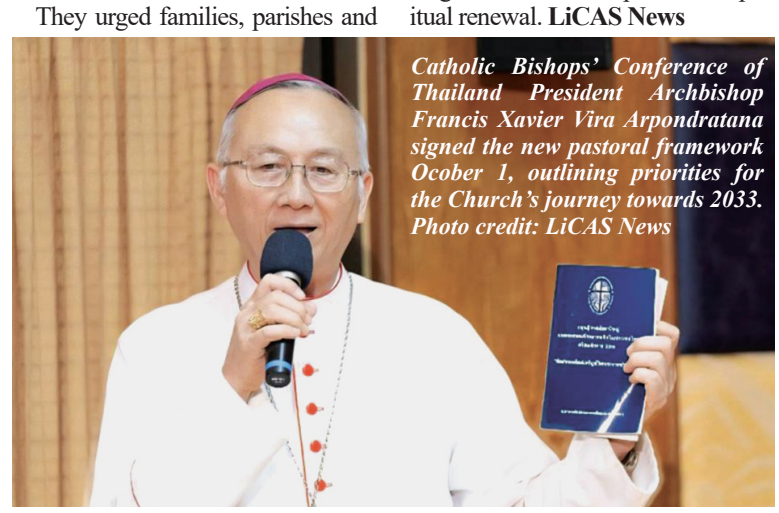
Church humanitarian networks are urged to respond to natural disasters, economic hardship and the needs of marginalised communities.

Drawing on *Laudato Si',* the bishops also call for ecological conversion, sustainable consumption and cooperation with other faith communities and civil society in caring for the environment.

The seventh priority concerns Catholic education. Schools are encouraged to help students develop a sense of purpose, moral responsibility and service alongside preparation for their future careers.

The bishops said the framework builds on the contributions of missionaries, clergy and laypeople who established Catholic communities in Thailand.

They urged families, parishes and Catholic institutions to work together, ensuring that the proclamation of the Good News finds expression in tangible acts of love, peace and spiritual renewal. **LiCAS News**



Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand President Archbishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana signed the new pastoral framework Ocober 1, outlining priorities for the Church's journey towards 2033. Photo credit: LiCAS News

Forming Catholic leaders for service

Catholic leadership calls for competence, spiritual depth, and the courage to serve. Forming such leaders means helping them bring faith into everyday decisions, upholding human dignity and remaining accountable to those they lead.

Leadership is clearest when difficult choices must be made when an employer faces pressure to cut costs, a public official is offered a favour, or a community leader must decide whose needs to address first. In such moments, knowledge matters. So do conscience, courage and the willingness to put others before oneself.

In a world marked by polarisation, inequality and uncertainty, the formation of Catholic leaders requires intellectual maturity, spiritual depth and a commitment to service. The challenge is to prepare women and men to understand complex realities while remaining attentive to the people whose lives their decisions shape.



Intellectual formation needs a spiritual foundation that keeps leadership rooted in Christ.

Faith and competence

Faith does not replace professional competence. It calls us to take our responsibilities seriously and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil them. A sincere desire to help must be accompanied by an understanding of what will actually help.

Catholic leaders therefore need to study the realities they hope to change. Depending on their responsibilities, this may involve economics, politics, education, culture or social conditions. They must learn to assess evidence, question assumptions and recognise the consequences of their choices.

An employer, for example, must consider both the sustainability of a business and the dignity of its workers. A journalist needs to verify information while considering how a report may affect vulnerable people. A parish leader must understand the community's needs before deciding which activities deserve its limited resources.

Such formation is not confined to universities. Community leaders bring valuable wisdom gained through work, service, and lived experience. Academic learning and practical experience can enrich one another when people remain willing to listen.

The essential disposition is humility: the recognition that responsibility does not make someone an expert in everything, and that seeking advice is part of leading well.

A spirituality that shapes decisions

Intellectual formation needs a spiritual foundation that keeps leadership rooted in Christ.

Prayer, Scripture and the Sacraments provide space to step back from immediate pressures and examine the heart. They invite questions that professional success can sometimes obscure: Why do I want to lead? Am I protecting my position or serving the people entrusted to me? Can I accept correction? Whose suffering have I failed to notice?

Jesus offers a demanding example. In washing His disciples' feet, He shows an authority expressed through humble service. Following Him requires a willingness to undertake tasks that bring little recognition and to remain close to people who cannot offer anything in return.

A spiritual life should bear fruit in everyday conduct: honesty with money, fairness towards colleagues, patience with disagreement and the courage to acknowledge mistakes. Prayer must deepen our attentiveness to these responsibilities.

Leaders, too, experience fatigue, disappointment and the temptation to measure their worth through achievement. A relationship with Christ helps them remember that their dignity does not depend on their position, and that service need not become a pursuit of personal importance.

Leadership beyond politics

Catholic leadership extends across society: into business, academia, the arts, the media, community organisations and family life.

In *Fratelli Tutti,* Pope Francis describes politics as a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity when it seeks the common good. This places the welfare of people at the centre of public responsibility.

The same spirit should animate leadership elsewhere. An educator who refuses to give up on a struggling student, an employer who pays fair wages, or a parish leader who makes space for overlooked voices can help shape a more just and compassionate society.

Families also form habits of leadership. Children learn something about authority from the way adults resolve conflict, share responsibilities, and treat those who depend on them.

In diverse societies, Catholic leaders must be able to work respectfully with people of other faiths and convictions. A clear Christian identity can sustain dialogue and cooperation, helping people pursue shared concerns without concealing their differences.



Faith doesn't replace professional competence; it demands it. A sincere desire to help must be backed by the knowledge, skills, and reality of what actually works. Catholic leaders must study the realities they hope to change.

Credibility grows when professed values become visible in relationships and decisions, especially in the treatment of those with little influence.

Formation and accompaniment

The International Academy of Catholic Leaders understands its mission as forming, serving and accompanying people entrusted with these responsibilities.

This calls for intellectual formation that engages seriously with faith and lived experience. Leaders need space to reflect on difficult decisions, discuss ethical tensions, and learn from one another.

Accompaniment matters because leadership can be lonely. Those expected to provide answers may find it difficult to admit uncertainty. Those praised for their achievements may receive little honest feedback.

A community of formation can provide both encouragement and challenge. It can help leaders recognise when ambition is overtaking service, when exhaustion is affecting judgement, or when loyalty to a group is silencing conscience.

Such support should strengthen accountability. The purpose is to help leaders remain open to correction, seek appropriate advice and renew their commitment to the people they serve.

Guided by Catholic social teaching

Catholic social teaching provides an essential foundation for this formation. Human dignity, the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity offer enduring principles for evaluating decisions and their consequences.

Human dignity requires us to see each person as worthy of respect, never merely as a worker, voter, consumer or problem to be managed. The common good asks whether our choices create conditions in which people and communities can flourish.

Solidarity draws us towards those whose burdens are easily ignored. Subsidiarity calls us to respect the capacity of people and local communities to participate in decisions affecting them, while providing support where it is needed.

These principles require careful application. A leader must ask who benefits from a decision, who bears its costs and whether those affected have been heard. Consultation becomes meaningful when it can influence the outcome.

Communion with the Pope and the bishops, together with fidelity to the Church's teaching, grounds Catholic leadership in the wider life of the Church. It guides discernment and calls for humility and continued examination of conscience. Faithful Catholics may reach different judgements about practical solutions while remaining committed to shared moral principles.

The Academy's task is to help form women and men whose knowledge is joined to faith, and whose faith becomes visible in service. Their contribution will be seen in honest decisions, patient listening, responsible stewardship and the courage to do what is right when it is inconvenient.

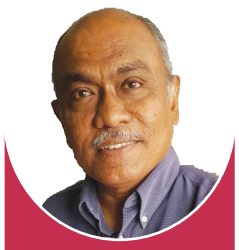
Through such daily fidelity, Catholic leaders can help restore trust and give others reason to hope.

Adapted from "The Forging of Authentic Catholic Leadership: Intelligence, Spirit, and Service" by Prof Alejandro Fontana, published by EXAUDI News. Edited and expanded for HERALD.



Catholic social teaching provides an essential foundation for this formation.

Catechesis and Liturgy: Exploring their relationship



Echoing the Faith

Dr Steven Selvaraju

In the Church, catechesis and liturgy share a close and essential relationship. Both catechesis (the instruction and transmission of Christian doctrine) and liturgy (the public worship and sacramental life of the Church) are so interrelated and interdependent that some theologians have described them as "two sides of a single coin". On the one hand, catechesis helps Catholics know and understand the significance of the liturgy, leading them to a more active and conscious participation in its celebration. Liturgy, on the other hand, is inherently catechetical in nature, and thereby, serves as content for catechesis.

The aim of this article is to examine the historical background of the relationship between these two important functions of the Church — a relationship that was closely knit during the early centuries, became fragmented at a certain point in Church history, and was restored following the Second Vatican Council.

An Intertwined Relationship

Perhaps the earliest description of the close connection between catechesis and liturgy is illustrated in Acts 2:42, 44 – 45:

> "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers… All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need."

The references to the teaching of the Apostles, the breaking of the bread, and prayer denote the functions of catechesis and liturgy, respectively. Together with building communion (brotherhood) and service (sharing everything), they formed the four key ecclesial actions of the early Christian community: *kerygma* (word), *leiturgia* (worship), *koinonia* (communion), and *diakonia* (service). The interconnectedness and interdependence of these actions were considered crucial to the life and mission of the Church. The link between catechesis and liturgy was further strengthened with the introduction of the adult catechumenate during the late second century. In the adult catechumenate — the process by which new members were initiated into the Church — catechesis was carried out within a liturgical setting. Each period of the process (evangelisation, the catechumenate, and purification/ enlightenment) included forms of catechesis and concluded with a liturgical rite.

These liturgical rites were the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, the Rite of Election, and the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist).

In reality, these liturgical rites served as doorways leading to each subsequent period. They also marked the high points of the catechumen's journey toward conversion and Christian maturity.

Catechesis at this time occurred mainly through homilies preached by the bishop during liturgical celebrations, delivered both to the faithful and to those seeking initiation. From the second through the fourth centuries, many bishops played a prominent role in the catechumenal process. Among them were Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386 AD), Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–397 AD), and Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD). Their writings and homilies demonstrate that catechesis was intimately connected with liturgical celebration.

Fragmentation of the Relationship

The decline of the catechumenate around the fifth century led to a gradual weakening of the bond between catechesis and liturgy. As infant baptism became widespread, fewer adults entered the initiation process. During the Middle Ages, the relationship was maintained to an extent through the Mass in general, and through the priest's homilies in particular, which served as the primary form of catechesis for the laity. Adults — specifically parents and guardians — were expected to listen attentively to the homily at Mass and later expound those lessons to their children at home.

Because most people during this period were illiterate, the liturgical signs and symbols used during Mass served as primary instructional tools. In addition, statues, paintings, stained-glass windows, tapestries, other forms of art, and cathedral architecture depicting biblical figures, passages, and saints were used to educate children and adults in the faith. Pilgrims travelling from small villages to city cathedrals or famous holy sites would spend hours using these "living catechisms" to teach the faith to their families.

The formal fragmentation between catechesis and liturgy occurred following the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. As reformers, such as Martin Luther, published catechisms to explain Protestant doctrine, the Catholic Church responded by producing its own standardised texts, including the *Catechism of the Council of Trent.* These catechisms were essential for ensuring that Catholics received clear, doctrinally sound instruction.

Over time, as the availability of printed catechisms grew, the written text became the primary instrument for transmitting the faith. Catechesis increasingly shifted out of the liturgical setting and into classroom-style academic environments. Consequently, faith came to be learned conceptually rather than experienced through active liturgical participation within the community — a model that predominated in the Church for the next four centuries.

Restoration of the Relationship

Scholarly research by liturgical and catechetical experts in the early twentieth century laid the groundwork for restoring the link between these two core functions of the Church. This movement culminated during the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar era. At the Council, the bishops called for the faithful to engage in full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations, noting that such participation is "demanded by the very nature of the liturgy"; (*Sacrosanctum Concilium,* 14). This mandate meant that catechising the faithful — children, adolescents, and adults alike — on the nature and significance of the liturgy became a priority for the Church, a point reinforced by subsequent Magisterial documents.

Perhaps the most significant development in reuniting catechesis and liturgy was the restoration of the adult catechumenate in 1972. The modern initiation process, known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), represents a rediscovery of the ancient catechumenate. It was the Second Vatican Council that directed the bishops to restore the catechumenate in the Church. The Council stated that, "the catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be put into use at the discretion of the local Ordinary" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium,* 64).

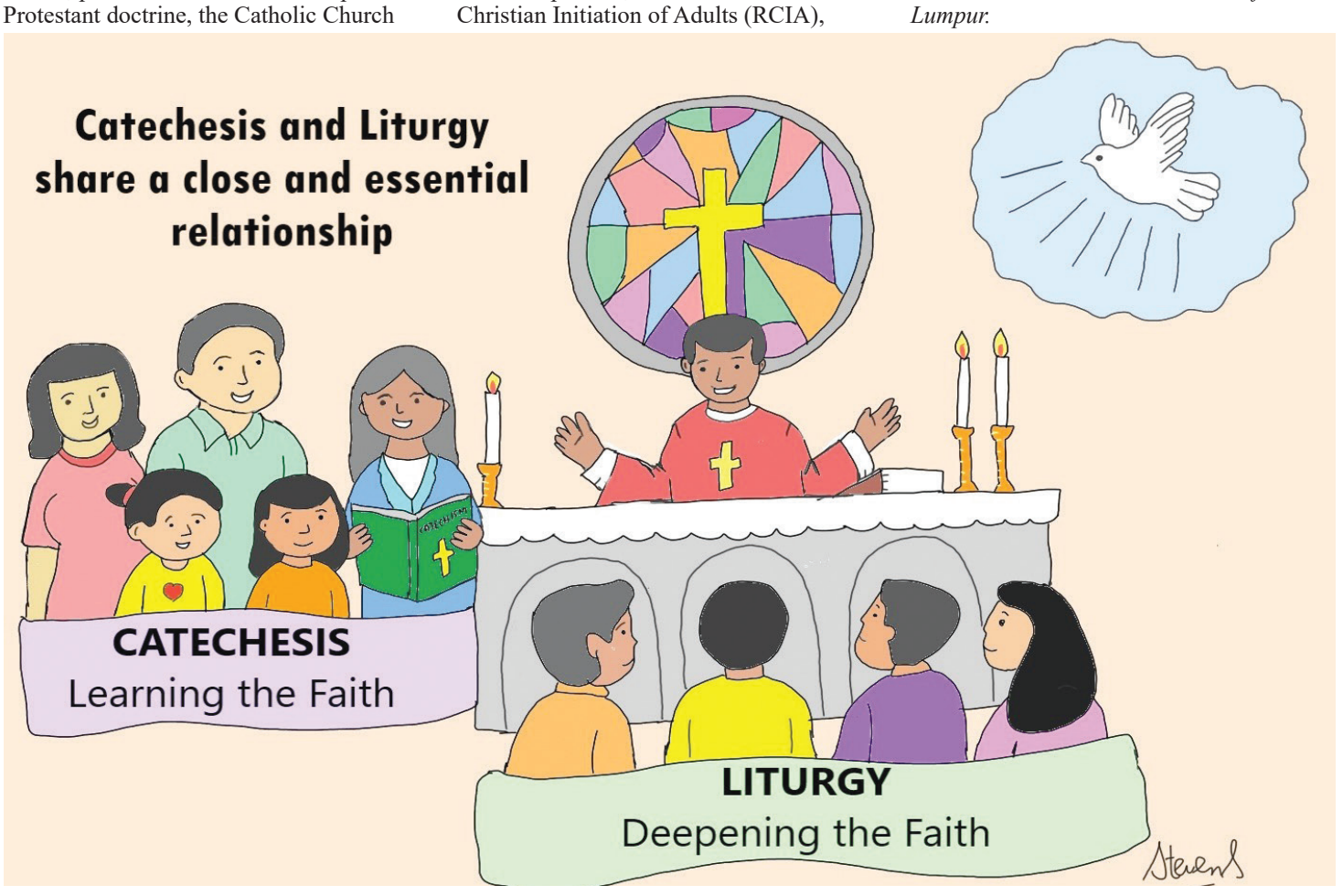
In the RCIA, catechesis has once again been rooted firmly within a liturgical context. As individuals seeking initiation progress through the stages of the RCIA process, they celebrate liturgical rites that parallel those of the ancient catechumenate. These rites function as threshold markers, reflecting their ongoing conversion and growth as disciples of Christ.

Within this process, liturgical signs and symbols, the liturgical year, the Eucharistic celebration, the homily, and other elements of divine worship serve an indispensable role.

Conclusion

In the post–Second Vatican Council era, numerous Church documents on catechesis have reaffirmed the fundamental link between catechesis and liturgy. Broadly, these teachings address two complementary aspects: ***catechesis on the liturgy*** and ***catechesis in the liturgy.*** Catechesis educates Catholics about the liturgy to foster active, conscious participation; simultaneously, the liturgy is inherently catechetical, providing both the content and context for catechesis. The next two articles will explore these two complementary aspects in greater depth.

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



Rooted in gratitude, renewed in mission

70 years of Good Shepherd presence in Malaysia

"One person is of more value than the whole world."

For 70 years, this conviction has guided the Good Shepherd Sisters in Malaysia: every person is precious, and no one is beyond the reach of God's merciful love.

The journey began in October 1956, when the Sisters arrived in Malaya at the invitation of Bishop Dominic Vendargon of Kuala Lumpur. Their response to God's call grew into a mission that continues to accompany women, children, families and communities today.

Founded by St Mary Euphrasia Pelletier in Angers, France, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd has apostolic and contemplative Sisters in 67 countries. Inspired by St John Eudes and St Mary Euphrasia, they uphold the dignity and human rights of every person.

Following Jesus, the Good Shepherd, they make God's merciful love tangible through prayer, presence and service: accompanying those who are vulnerable or wounded, supporting healing and reconciliation, and working towards a just and compassionate society.

A mission that took root and grew

The Sisters established their first convent at Jalan Ampang and opened Good Shepherd Convent School in 1957, offering a kindergarten, nursery and Junior International School, alongside a residential programme for girls from families experiencing poverty.

In 1960, the convent and residential programmes moved to Madonna Heights, Hulu Kelang, which also became a formation centre for young women discerning religious life. That year marked the beginning of Pusat Kebajikan Good Shepherd (PKGS), whose work developed to include the Sekolah Khas and Teenage Centre.

In 1978, the early years education programme moved to Medan Damansara and became Villamaria Good Shepherd Kindergarten, continuing the Sisters' commitment to nurturing children.

Inspired by St Mary Euphrasia's invitation to "go forward", the mission expanded to Ipoh in 1975, Johor in 1986 and Sabah in 1988.

As needs changed, programmes increasingly supported women and children, particularly girls experiencing sexual and gender-based violence. Collaboration with NGOs, faith-based organisations, government agencies and the local Church strengthened this work.

The work of PKGS continued through two legal entities: Good Shepherd Services, established in 2015, and Global Shepherds, established in 2017. Today, Sisters and Partners in Mission share this responsibility as board members, leadership teams, staff and volunteers.

A legacy carried in people's lives



For Professor Jane Fernandez *(pic),* the meaning of the Good Shepherd mission is deeply personal. She spent a decade with the Sisters as a teacher and later principal of PKGS, years that shaped her subsequent career in academia and senior executive leadership in Australia.

At Madonna Heights, she witnessed faith expressed through practical service, particularly among children, young people and women facing hardship. The Sisters' commitment to justice and healing, she recalls, brought them into the struggles of everyday life, creating safe places where people could recover hope.

Their generosity also changed her own future. The Sisters supported her education in Australia through Misereor, Germany. Having lost her father at eight, she experienced their care as a profound gift of belonging and support.

Before her departure, the Sisters celebrated a Mass for her future and gathered at the airport to bid her farewell.

"They turned the pain of separation into a gift of love: to my mother they gave courage; to me they transferred, with every hug, the heart of the Good Shepherd," she recalls.

That memory continues to connect inspiration with purpose in her life and leadership. She credits the Sisters with helping shape the legacy she now carries through her work with educators.

Mercy and compassion speak most strongly to her. Their example has taught her to recognise grace in ordinary lives and small, unexpected gestures. She sees their ministry as especially relevant amid today's complex crises, responding with sensitivity and care to people wounded by suffering.

"They have inspired and blessed countless lives and, they rise by lifting others!" she says. *"Syabas* Sisters!"

Gratitude that leads us forward



For Sr Dorothy Khaw RGS *(pic),* based in Ipoh, the anniversary is an occasion to thank God for His guidance, protection and blessings, and to honour the pioneer Sisters, lay partners and all who have gone before them.







"We stand on their shoulders and inherit a precious legacy of faith, compassion and commitment," she reflects.

That inheritance, she believes, brings a responsibility to renew and deepen the mission, carrying it forward with courage and hope. A rapidly changing world calls the Good Shepherd community to listen attentively to women, children, families and those who are vulnerable, while remaining open to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

"What is God asking of me, and of us, at this moment in our Good Shepherd journey?" she asks.

Her hope is for Sisters and Partners in Mission to be authentic, joyful witnesses, rooted in their relationship with Jesus and sharing the mercy and compassion they have received. She envisions communities of welcome, joy and hope, where Christ is encountered and others can discover God's call.

Looking ahead, she encourages generous collaboration, creative responses and a willingness to explore new paths of service.

"With grateful hearts for the past, courageous hearts for the present, and hopeful hearts for the future, may we continue to be the Good Shepherd's compassionate presence in Malaysia."

Could the next chapter begin with your "yes"?

"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out labourers into His harvest." — Matthew 9:37–38

Seventy years ago, the pioneer Sisters answered that call generously. Today, Malaysian Good Shepherd Sr Joan Lopez serves in Rome as the first Asian Congregational Leader, elected at the 31st Congregational Chapter in 2021 for a six-year term.

As a new chapter begins, the Sisters invite young women in Malaysia to pause, pray, and consider whether God may be calling them to the Good Shepherd way of life.

Perhaps you feel drawn to prayer and community, or to standing alongside those who suffer. Perhaps you sense a quiet invitation to offer your life in the service of God's merciful love.

You need not have every answer before taking the first step. Discernment begins with a willingness to listen and the courage to explore.

Come and discover the Good Shepherd way of life. Journey with the Sisters as you discern where God may be leading you.

The next chapter of this mission may begin with your "yes".

Rooted in gratitude and renewed in mission, the Good Shepherd community looks ahead with trust in the love that brought the Sisters to Malaya 70 years ago — a love still calling people to serve, accompany and bring hope.

To connect with the Good Shepherd Sisters: 011-1981 6722 (Sr Kelly)/ Email: *goodshepherdsisters2026@gmail.com*

How do we prepare to say goodbye?



A Blessed Life

Tianne Pereira

Not too long ago, I was getting ready to leave the country for a week-long work engagement. A week. It doesn't sound like very long, but as a mother, even seven days can suddenly feel like an eternity. And as I packed my things, I felt that familiar little ache of anxiety. I was going to miss my boy. I was going to miss his voice, his stories, his hugs, his endless questions, and all the small things.

The day before I left, I found myself hugging and kissing Josiah a little more than usual. I wanted to hold on to him. But I also had to put on a brave face because I knew what would happen if I let my emotions show. "Mummy, please don't go." Those words are enough to undo any mother. All I could do was smile and hug him tighter. I reassured him that Mummy would be back soon.

Then came the morning. I woke before him, quietly got ready, gently kissed him, and walked out the door while my little boy was still asleep. And somewhere between closing that door and getting into my Grab, the tears came. I cried because I was going to miss my baby and I wouldn't see him for a whole week. And then, in that quiet moment, I did what I have always done whenever life leaves me with a question I don't know how to answer — I looked for my mummy. Even though she has been gone for so many years, there are still moments when my first instinct is to wonder what she would say, what she would advise, or simply how she would have handled it.

And this time, I found myself asking something I had never really stopped to think about — how did she do it? How did she prepare herself to leave us? She knew she was going to pass on. She knew she was going somewhere we could not follow. She knew she would never see us again in this life. And suddenly, the waterworks came a little heavier and my seven-day goodbye felt very small in comparison.

I could leave knowing I would come home. I could count the days. I could look at photographs, make a video call, hear his voice and tell him, "Mummy loves you." But my mummy had to prepare for a goodbye without a return date, and I cannot even start to imagine how heartbreaking that must have been. How do you say goodbye when you know it is forever? My sisters and I were still so young, with so many milestones ahead of us. How was she able to look at the faces of the people she loved and find the strength to smile? How did she manage to comfort us and tell us everything would be alright? Perhaps that is one of the greatest acts of love, trying to make someone else's goodbye less painful, even when your own heart is breaking.



Perhaps as Christians, this is where our faith carries us when our hearts cannot. We do not believe that death is the end (and I am so grateful for that). We believe in a God who conquered death and promised us eternal life, in the hope that one day every goodbye would become an awaited reunion. But I also believe faith does not mean we are not supposed to cry. It simply gives our tears somewhere to go.

Maybe we can never truly prepare ourselves to never see someone we love again. Maybe we are not meant to. Maybe we are simply meant to love deeply while we have the chance, to hug a little longer, say "I love you" without waiting for the perfect moment, forgive sooner, and be present for the ordinary days. Because one day we may realise that those ordinary days were the ones we treasured most.

I think that is what I am taking away from this little journey of mine. To be more grateful for the days I have, for the people I get to come home to and for all the little moments in between.

I write this for anyone who needs to hear it and as a reminder to myself, to be thankful — for the days I had with my mummy, thankful for the days I now have with my own little boy and the people I get to love, and thankful that even in the hardest goodbyes, God is there. And maybe that is enough for today.

Tianne *identifies first as a Catholic daughter, sister, wife, and mother. From years in the media industry, she eventually started and continues to run her own businesses while teaching part-time. She has been actively serving in church for as long as she can remember and is involved in various charities.*

Perfection in human dignity



Connecting the Dots

Ann Teoh

At our last BEC reflection, we dutifully tried to answer the question "Do I respect the dignity of others in the family?" I am not sure how your session went, but we meandered without answering the question. One reason, I think, is that we rarely think of dignity in the context of the family. We use words like love and respect, but seldom does dignity pop up.

While doing my sharing, I grumbled inside about why the BEC reflection paper had to be so esoteric.

But the truth is, dignity is a word every Catholic should know given its emphasis in the Church's social doctrine.

Our Church believes that every person enjoys innate human dignity, simply by being human. Our dignity comes from being created by God. It is inalienable.

Our dignity does not depend on anything else, be it gender, ethnicity, wealth, social class, or achievements. Not even religion or belief in God.

I find it most comforting that Pope Leo XIV says in *Magnifica Humanitas* (MH): "No sin, failure, humiliation or exclusion can diminish the profound value of the human life that God has willed and called into being." (# 52).

Yet, not everyone believes in dignity for all. In some cultures, even today, girls are deemed less worthy than boys. Women were paid less than men for the same work until recently. Slavery was abolished in British Malaya only in 1915. In Malaysia, migrant workers are still exploited because they are seen as less human than the rest of us. They get less rest, less pay, and less respect. On social media recently, there was a lot of hate speech against Rohingya refugees.

In conflict zones, civilian deaths are justified in perverse ways. Then there is the slow homicide. The US government blocks trade with Cuba and penalises anyone who tries to trade with it, causing a humanitarian crisis on the island nation. Underlying such actions is the belief that some lives are worth less.

Closer to home, what does it mean when we say we respect the dignity of others in the family, and I would like to add, BECs and the community?

Pope Leo XIV has this to say: "Among these (new) ideologies, I consider particularly insidious the one that suggests that every person must earn or justify his or her own worth, to the point of attributing greater value to those who are more efficient or effective." (MH 55).

He warns against persons being reduced to "a means of achieving results, a resource to be used and exploited."

"The value of persons, however, does not depend on what they achieve or produce. Some rights apply to everyone simply by virtue of being human, and no human power can legitimately deny or arbitrarily limit them."

Do we subconsciously judge people by how useful or productive they are?

Do we lean towards people who are more talented, more efficient, more productive, and more accomplished?

On the flip side, do we ever slightly look down on those who can't seem to get their act together? Maybe your sister's husband who's been at the same job for the last 20 years? Or the nephew who has been job-hopping since leaving school?

Deep down, do you think they are defective?

Mr Lim has dementia but loves talking to you at the fence; do you tolerate him just to be polite, or do you see him as one deeply loved by God? There's also the loud and disruptive family down the block who just moved in – it seems they have an autistic teenager. Still.

The "invisible" Bangladeshi who washes your car. Would he be more human to you if he were Malaysian? If the *kakak* in your office earns RM10 an hour, is her life worth less than yours since you earn RM100 an hour? If the answer is no, why not?

Striving for excellence is part of being human. Work is good, whether paid or unpaid. But when a person's dignity is judged on his or her usefulness to the economy or social functions, it's a slippery slope to discrimination, exploitation and persecution of the vulnerable.

Let's go one step further. Maybe, very quietly, you judge yourself instead, as broken and useless. Maybe you think you failed to reach the potential that you (and your parents) thought you had. Or with your recent stroke, you feel more of a burden than a person. Perhaps you have made so many mistakes that you think God no longer loves you as much as the person who has it all together.

Pope Leo XIV says, "Our relationship with life seems to be in crisis today. Everything that appears as a limit – incapacity, illness, old age, suffering, vulnerability – tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected, rather than a reality through which our humanity matures and opens itself into relationships." (MH 118)

"…when our limits become tangible: when we face rejection, when we suffer illness or loss of a loved one, when we encounter our own weakness or failure. Mysteriously, it is precisely in such moments that we can discover a new wisdom, tangibly experience the closeness of others and encounter the presence of the Lord." (# 119)

Illnesses, failures, and loss cause immense pain and suffering, but such moments can also be opportunities for God's grace. Human dignity can often shine brightly in our brokenness.

Thus, the best way to express our dignity and respect others' is to allow ourselves to be loved, and to see and treat everyone with the heart of Christ. It's still back to Christ's "Love one another as I have loved you." For that, we need to continually pray and open ourselves to God's love, with a heart of wonder and gratitude.

Let me look at the September BEC reflection question again.

P.S. Pope Leo XIV's 2026 encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, highlights the greatness, dignity, and centrality of the human person and how to safeguard humanity in the time of Artificial Intelligence.

Ann *lives in Petaling Jaya. She believes we will see God's lacework of truth, beauty and goodness when we connect the dots He gives us.*



Fr Joseph Stephen, CSsR

How will we walk together?

Much has been written about the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026), held in Sibu, Sarawak, from September 9 – 12. Through reports in the *HERALD* and the personal accounts of delegates, even those who could not attend have shared in the experience.

I would like to reflect on what this gathering ask of us now, particularly those entrusted with leadership in our dioceses. At the heart of that question is a word we hear often today: synodality. How do we allow it to shape the way we lead, listen, and make decisions?

Our journey towards a more participatory Church did not begin in Sibu. In 1976, the bishops and priests of Peninsular Malaysia gathered for the *Aggiornamento* to pray, reflect and chart a common pastoral direction in response to the Second Vatican Council. Building Christ-centred communities, forming the faithful, promoting dialogue and responding to the needs of the poor emerged as priorities.

Subsequent gatherings in 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2016 continued that journey. Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), youth and family life became important areas of pastoral attention. Participation gradually widened to include religious and laity. We can recognise in this development the gentle prompting of the Holy Spirit, reminding us that every member of the People of God has gifts to offer and a responsibility to share.

MPC2026 brought that journey into a national setting. Bishops, priests, religious and lay people, including young people, from all nine dioceses across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak gathered to discern together as one Malaysian Church. Those who worked tirelessly to prepare the convention deserve our gratitude.

For many, the gathering carried something of the spirit of Pentecost: a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit continues to speak through the diversity of God's people. The challenge now is to carry that openness into the ordinary life of our dioceses and parishes.

I believe one invitation concerns the way bishops exercise leadership. The administrative responsibilities of a diocese are real and necessary. Yet people also need a shepherd who listens, accompanies, and discerns with them. Can we give greater space to this dimension of episcopal ministry?

We are familiar with the image of the Church as a pyramid, with decisions flowing from the top. A circle offers another image: people gathered around Christ, listening to one another and recognising the gifts entrusted to each. Within the Church's distinct ministries and responsibilities, this image can help us grow in communion and shared responsibility.

Some bishops already embody this approach. Their example encourages us to make listening and accompaniment a consistent part of Church life.

As a member of the Council of Priests in my diocese, I value the opportunity to gather with our bishop. Canon law describes this council as a representative body of priests that assists the bishop in the governance of the diocese for the pastoral good of its people.

For me, these meetings should be sacred and humbling occasions. We need to speak honestly about the blessings and challenges of diocesan life, including the experiences of priests, deacons, religious, and laity. We need to listen carefully, particularly when another person's perspective unsettles our own.

The bishop retains responsibility for decisions, within the requirements of canon law. Our contribution is to offer thoughtful counsel in a spirit of trust. Such dialogue requires respect for one another and appropriate confidentiality, so that difficult matters can be raised with honesty and care.

That same spirit should animate our encounters with lay leaders. In dioceses where councils of laity or pastoral gatherings already exist, these deserve a meaningful place in pastoral planning, with opportunities for dialogue and follow-up.

A visit to almost any parish reveals how much its life depends on committed lay people. They serve in faith formation, BECs, Christian initiation, marriage preparation, youth ministry and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, among many other areas. Without their contribution, parish priests and their assistants would struggle to meet the community's pastoral needs.

These men and women bring experience, insight, and gifts rooted in their baptismal calling. Their voices should help shape the mission in which they already share.

Regular diocesan pastoral gatherings would give bishops and their teams opportunities to hear directly from those serving in parishes. What brings them joy? Where do they encounter difficulties? Do they receive the formation, encouragement, and guidance they need? How are priests and lay leaders supporting one another?

These conversations can help identify pastoral priorities and strengthen collaboration. Listening becomes fruitful when people can see how their experiences have informed discernment and action.

The permanent diaconate also invites reflection. Restored as a permanent ministry in the Latin Church following the Second Vatican Council, it is now part of the pastoral life of some Malaysian dioceses. As we learn to appreciate this vocation, questions about formation, responsibilities and working relationships will naturally arise.

Do deacons feel welcomed as brothers in ministry? Are their roles understood and respected? When difficulties arise with a priest, whom can they approach for support?

Deacons belong to the clergy, but they are not members of the presbyterate, which comprises priests. The Council of Priests therefore cannot serve as their representative body. Nevertheless, there should be regular opportunities for deacons to meet their bishop and appropriate forums for dialogue with priests. The diocesan pastoral council can also include deacons alongside priests, religious and laity.

Such encounters can nurture understanding, address tensions and encourage reconciliation. Walking together requires us to make room for one another's experience.

All this calls for trust: in our bishops, priests, deacons, religious and lay leaders. Trust grows when people are heard, responsibilities are clear and concerns receive an honest response.

We also need to confront clericalism and the temptation to assume that ordination makes a person's views automatically wiser or more worthy of attention. Each vocation has its responsibilities, and every baptised person shares in the dignity and mission of the Church.

The conversion required is deeply spiritual. We must loosen our hold on the conviction, "I have the answers", and enter into prayerful listening, ready to receive what the Holy Spirit may reveal through someone else.

The convention focused on four realities: Family, Church, Ecology and Society. There is much to do before we gather again. We can begin with the structures already available to us: councils of priests, diocesan and parish pastoral councils, and pastoral assemblies. Their effectiveness will depend on the spirit in which we use them and our willingness to act on what we discern.

Sibu has given us an experience to carry home. Its promise will unfold in the everyday choices we make: to listen patiently, speak honestly, pray together, and share responsibility for the Church's mission.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us, and may we have the humility and courage to walk together.

Our guest columnist this week is **Fr Joseph Stephen, CSsR,** *parish priest of the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh.*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Relating to our loved ones after they die

In 1979, Sheldon Vanauken published a book entitled *A Severe Mercy;* in it he tells the story of the death of his wife, Davey. The book is an account of an extraordinary romance, cut short while still in full bloom by Davey's premature death.

This story has intrigued many people, both because of the extraordinary relationship between Sheldon and Davey before her death and because of the relationship between them after her death.

Vanauken describes how, after her death, he still felt her presence strongly and vividly. She was gone, in that brutal and irrevocable way death takes loved ones away, but he still felt her presence — as real as he had before she died.

In the early months after her death, her presence to him was constant, guiding, sure, consoling, the same as it had been while she was alive. She had died, but inside himself he felt her present — as wife, lover, best friend, soulmate. And during those months he always carried her wedding ring in his pocket, which he fingered tenderly many times each day. Touching it helped keep him aware of her presence.

One day, while on a ship crossing the Atlantic, he felt her presence change. In the silence of his heart and soul, he felt her speaking to him, telling him that, up to now, they had needed that kind of presence with each other, but that this now needed to change. They needed to move to a different plane in their relationship. She was telling him that she needed to "let him go" in the way she had been present to him until now, and she needed to ask him to "let her go" in the way they were now present to each other. It was a difficult moment, but Sheldon understood its meaning. He took the ring from his pocket and quietly dropped it into the ocean.

From then onward, Davey was still present to him, but now in a new way. Her presence now was less explicit, though not more distant. Now her presence was less that of the earthly wife, soulmate, and best friend, and more the presence of a person who loves you and holds you in a way that's harder to describe.

Thousands of people who have lost loved ones to death, including myself, can identify with that story, both in terms of feeling the presence of a deceased loved one inside us, and in terms of feeling this relationship, at a point, develop and move to a new plane.

In my own case, I lost both parents when I was twenty-three years old. For nearly two years, like Sheldon Vanauken, I felt their presence as sure, guiding, and parental (they were still very much my mom and dad, still very much with me); though, in my case, it was not always a consoling and warm presence. The pain of their loss would occasionally bring me feelings and tears that were not warm. My mom and dad were still with me, but at this early stage their deaths still left a cold scar.

However, sometime between the first and second year after their deaths, this changed. For me, unlike for Vanauken, there wasn't a clear moment when this happened. It happened gradually and imperceptibly; their presence to me and within me changed.

But, parallel to Vanauken's experience, what I experienced was a shift in presence from one plane to another. I still felt their presence, just as before, but now something had let go, even as something else took its place.

I felt their presence now as a deep consolation, and their loss no longer hurt as before. I no longer felt a need to pray for them. Instead, now I felt a need (which I still feel today) to pray to them.

They were still my parents, but something had changed. I hesitate to use words to describe this because they might sound vague and wishful, but what I felt can only be characterised this way: They were still my parents — alive, deeply concerned for me, and more present in my life than they ever could be while still in this life. But now I felt that presence as something higher, more universally shared with others, and more tied to God's love and presence to me. It became harder to differentiate their presence from the general feeling of divine providence that I sense in my life.

I come from a large family. Basically, all my siblings had a similar experience. Moreover, many people have shared similar stories concerning how they continue to feel their relationships with their deceased loved ones change and grow even after their deaths.

Vanauken's story of an ongoing, developing relationship with a loved one who has died is paralleled everywhere. Relationships continue to grow and develop even after death.

Exotic stuff? No! *Tis the stuff of dogma.* One of the essential articles of our faith teaches that death doesn't end a relationship.

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

LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER

Dear children,

Have you ever been asked a tricky question that made you think, "Hmm… what should I say?" Some people once tried to trap Jesus with a tricky question about money. They asked Him if it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Roman ruler. But Jesus knew they were trying to catch Him in His answer.

He knew what they were trying to do. He asked them to show Him a coin and then asked, "Whose picture is this?" They answered, "Caesar's." Jesus then said, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." Jesus showed them that there are things we are responsible for in our daily lives, but there is also something much greater that belongs to God: our hearts, our love, and our lives.

As children, you may not have to worry about taxes, but you still have many ways to give something back to God. You can give Him your time by praying, your talents by helping others, and your love by being kind and caring. You can obey your parents, help with chores, share your things and stand up for someone who needs help.

These little acts may seem ordinary, but they can become gifts to God when we do them with love. So, children, look around and within you today and ask yourself, "What can I give to God?"

Love, Aunty C



Find the Coins!

Look carefully at the picture.
There are coins hidden in the scene.
Can you find and count them all?



I found _____ coins!

Word Jumble: What Did Jesus Say?

The letters are all mixed up!
Unscramble the words below.
Then use the answers to complete the sentence at the bottom.

1. DGO _____
2. NCOI _____
3. SJEUS _____
4. ASRECA _____
5. RHEAT _____
6. GIVE _____

"Give to _____ what belongs to _____."

The Impossible Coin

Only ONE coin has Caesar's image.
Find the coin that belongs to Caesar.
Circle the coin.



Clues:

1. It isn't in the top row.
2. It isn't beside the star.
3. It is directly below the largest coin.

YOUTH

ST FRANCIS INSPIRES NEW COMIC BOOK ADVENTURE



Francis of Assisi once dreamed of riding into battle and returning a hero. He wanted adventure, recognition and the glory of becoming a knight. God would lead him towards a very different kind of greatness.

That journey comes alive in *Francis: Herald of the Great King,* a new comic book from Voyage Comics, released as the Church commemorates the 800th anniversary of the saint's death.

The story opens amid the Battle of Collestrada in 1202. Young Francis charges into the fighting, confident that glory awaits him. Instead, defeat and a year in prison unsettle his ambitions. Back home, the promise of wealth through his father's cloth business cannot silence his growing sense that something is missing.

For young people navigating expectations, disappointments and questions about the future, that uncertainty may feel familiar. What happens when the life we imagined no longer seems to fit? Could a setback open our eyes to a different calling?

Through vivid illustrations and an adventurous storyline, the comic follows Francis as he gradually discovers his answer. Encounters with people he once avoided, including those with leprosy, begin to change him. At the crumbling chapel of San Damiano, he hears Christ's call: "Repair My church, which is falling into ruin."

His conversion unfolds through choices, struggles and a growing willingness to listen.

Written by Voyage Comics founder Philip Kosloski, with artwork by Will Nathans and colours by Jay David Ramos, the book is aimed primarily at readers aged eight to 14, although its creators say their comics also attract teenagers and adults.

Fr Paschal Mary Yohe, who contributed to the project, hopes readers will recognise that saints were people whose desires and decisions developed over time. Francis' journey offers encouragement when ambitions collapse, discouragement takes hold or family tensions become overwhelming.



The illustrated story follows Francis towards the beginnings of the Franciscan order. Additional reflection pages help readers explore his conversion and the meaning behind his choices.

Francis' adventure invites us to reconsider what makes a life worthwhile. His search for greatness led him towards people who were poor, overlooked and in need of mercy.

Perhaps the question for us is this: are we willing to let God reshape our dreams — and discover whom those dreams might lead us to serve?

Francis: Herald of the Great King is available at *VoyageComics.com.* **NCRegister**

Pope Leo XIV praises Korean courage

VATICAN: At an audience celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Korean Pontifical College's inauguration in Rome on October 5, Pope Leo XIV met with Korean clergy and reflected on their remarkable journey of faith.

As preparations gather momentum for World Youth Day in Seoul in 2027, the meeting provided an occasion to celebrate how the Church in Korea has grown into a dynamic land of missionaries.

The Pope emphasised that the Korean Church's vibrant growth rests firmly on the testimony of its martyrs. Through relentless persecution, devastating wars, crippling poverty, and national partition, Korean Catholics have continuously overcome incredible hardship.

"The Korean people have demonstrated throughout history an extraordinary strength of character," Leo remarked.

The Pope said it was a powerful testament to God's grace that the faithful kept "the ability to go through the ordeal without losing hope and without letting suffering harden the heart."

Drawing pastoral inspiration from history, Leo highlighted the tireless witness of Venerable Thomas Choe Yang-Eop. Known for walking endless miles across Korea to connect remote, hidden villages and bring them the light of the Gospel, Fr Choe serves as an enduring model for modern ministry, the Pope said.

The Pope urged the assembled clergy to imitate Choe's zeal: "In our time we have much need for men and women who have the courage to do good even when it costs them."

Recognising the diverse dioceses and backgrounds represented among the clergy, the pope called for a renewed commitment to synodality. By listening to one another and moving past regional differences, priests embody a unified Church walking together on the same path through Christ, he said.

Finally, looking ahead to hosting the world's Catholic youth in 2027, the Pope reminded the clergy to ground all their preparations in constant prayer, seeking the intercession of St Andrew Kim Taegon, patron of Korean clergy.

"Young people from all over the world will arrive in a land where the Gospel has grown through the testimony of the martyrs," Leo said. **EWTN News**



Pope Leo XIV receives a gift after his private audience with Korean clergy and religious at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican on October 5, 2026. (Vatican Media)



TEAMWORK AND LAUGHTER STRENGTHEN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

C.R. Lourdes

JOHOR BAHRU: Friendship grows when people learn to work together, share what they have and make room for one another. That spirit shaped the annual Telematch organised by the Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) English Youths at St Joseph's Field.

Guided by the motto *Teamwork Makes the Dream Work*, the gathering brought parish youths together with members of the Fiat Domini Youth Group from the Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram, for games and fellowship.

A committee comprising youths of different ages planned and led the activities, putting into practice the cooperation they hoped to encourage among participants. Each game was designed to strengthen unity and build a caring community.

An icebreaker, *Whacko,* helped get the day under way, followed by *Twist and Tangle, Bring Me, Balloon Snake* and *Dodgeball Treasure.* The much-anticipated *Water Balloon Volleyball* and *Water Balloon Fight* added plenty of splashes and laughter.

The playful *Anything But a Cup* challenge also sparked creativity. Participants brought an assortment of unconventional drinking vessels, including a blender, a Malaysian half-boiled egg maker, a trophy and a large water dispenser bottle. A spray bottle took the prize for the best entry.

Alongside group prizes for the games, individual awards recognised the *Most Sporting Male and Female, the Wettest Person* and *the Driest Person,* adding to the light-hearted atmosphere.

The spirit of teamwork continued after the games, as the youths joined hands to clean up the field before gathering for a potluck lunch at Pusat Kasih Caritas in the Caritas MJD Centre.

With participants contributing food and drinks, the meal offered time to relax, share stories and strengthen friendships. The shared responsibility for preparing, participating and clearing up gave practical expression to the day's message of unity.

The organisers expressed their gratitude to parish priest Fr Claurence Motoyou OFM and the parish office for their support and encouragement.

Through laughter, shared effort and simple acts of service, the gathering offered the youths an experience of a caring parish community — one they each have a part in building.





Learning to love as God intended



SHAH ALAM: Form 4 students of the Church of Divine Mercy had the opportunity to attend a two-day Theology of the Body (TOB) camp at the end of September, as part of their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation next year.

For the teenagers, the camp offered more than preparation for a sacrament. It became an opportunity to reflect more deeply on themselves, love, relationships, and God's purpose for their lives.

"The main thing that we teenagers think when we hear the word camp is that, oh, it's just going to be another boring camp," said Imelda a/p John Paull. "But TOB proved that wrong."

Throughout the camp, the speakers addressed topics relevant to the young people's everyday experiences, connecting faith with questions of identity, relationships, love, and self-worth. While some discussions were challenging, they encouraged the participants to examine their beliefs and how they live them out.

One of the key lessons was that love is more than an expression or feeling; it is demonstrated through actions.

"We learned what love means and what it means to love another person," Imelda said. "Love is not just an expression, but it is shown in our actions towards others."

The participants were reminded that authentic love does not seek to use another person for personal satisfaction, but involves putting the other person first, respecting them, and genuinely caring for them.

Brandaan Pharell John said one idea that particularly stood out to him was that human beings are made for love because they are created in the image of God.

"Love is not about using another person to satisfy ourselves. Instead, real love is about giving, respecting, and caring for someone," he said.

The sessions also explored the role of God's grace in daily life, reminding the teenagers that they can rely on God even amid the challenges they face.

Each session was accompanied by group activities, giving the participants opportunities to discuss questions openly, learn from one another's experiences, and build friendships. The activities also helped make the sessions more interactive rather than simply lecture based.

The days concluded with spiritual reflections, providing moments of quiet where the participants could step away from the activities and consider how the lessons applied to their own lives.

"Each day ended with a quiet spiritual reflection where we could put aside the activities, be still and spend some personal time in God's presence," Brandaan said.

Although the camp ran from morning until evening, there was ample time for learning, activities, and fellowship. The participants also appreciated the food and drinks provided throughout the day.

For Imelda, the experience helped broaden her perspective and gave her a deeper understanding of herself and those around her.

"Overall, this camp was a wonderful experience that helped us to broaden our perspectives and to understand ourselves and those around us better," she said.

Brandaan described the experience as enjoyable and meaningful, with lessons he hopes to carry beyond the camp.

"Most importantly, I came away with lessons about love that I hope to apply not only in my faith, but also in my everyday life," he said.

The participants said they would recommend the TOB camp to other young people seeking to explore their faith, relationships and understanding of themselves more deeply.



Fr Alvin Ho SJ blessing the icon of St Michael the Archangel.

Angels as companions in faith at Stella Maris

KUALA LUMPUR: Newly installed icons in the chapel of Stella Maris International School (SMIS) are helping students connect their daily prayers with reminders of God's care and the companionship of angels.

The initiative began on the Feast of the Archangels, September 29, when school chaplain Fr Alvin Ho, SJ blessed an icon of St Michael the Archangel after Mass and led students in the Prayer to St Michael.

Depicting the archangel in armour, holding a sword beneath a radiant halo, the icon bears the prayer and a reference to Daniel 12:1, which describes Michael as the great prince who protects God's people.

In his homily, Fr Alvin explained the roles of the three archangels named in Scripture: Michael, associated with protection and the defence of God's people; Gabriel, who announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus; and Raphael, associated with healing and accompanying travellers in the Book of Tobit.

The focus turned to personal accompaniment on October 2, the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels. Fr Alvin encouraged students to seek their Guardian Angels' protection, inspiration and guidance. After Mass, he blessed two new Guardian Angel icons and led students in the Guardian Angel prayer.

Each icon portrays an angel accompanying a single child — one a boy, the other a girl — emphasising personal care. Both bear the Guardian Angel prayer, with one featuring Psalm 91:11 on God's angels guarding His people, and the other Matthew 18:10, which speaks of the angels of the little ones seeing the Father's face in heaven.

The images reinforce a devotion already woven into the students' prayer life. Those attending chapel Mass regularly recite the Guardian Angel prayer beforehand, a practice encouraged by Fr Alvin as a reminder to seek God's protection from harm and occasions of sin.

"These practices form part of our school's wider efforts to nurture children in the Catholic faith by connecting prayer and Church tradition with experiences they can understand and remember," he said.

After each celebration, students received bookmarks featuring the respective image and prayer, giving them a reminder to take home.

Faith formation at SMIS also continues through the Catholic Students' Society, which serves both the primary and secondary wings. Its activities include church visits, Bible Knowledge classes, outreach programmes and charity drives. Students also serve at Mass as altar servers, lectors, choir members, musicians and audio-visual assistants.

Since becoming chaplain in August 2023, Fr Alvin has supported the society's efforts to strengthen the school's Catholic identity and nurture faith, service and compassion.

The icons offer students a lasting reminder that the prayer and trust nurtured in the chapel can accompany them into everyday life.

A lifetime of care, a farewell of respect



Payamma died at the age of 88 – after having served the Jacob family for 26 years. She was a Hindu woman. Photo Credit: Express

KOCHI: An Orthodox Christian priest in Kerala honoured the faith of an elderly Hindu woman who had cared for his family for 26 years by arranging for her funeral rites to be held at his home.

Vedic chants filled the residence of Fr O. J. Jacob at Chottanikkara in Ernakulam district as relatives, neighbours and visitors gathered to bid farewell to 88-year-old Parvathi, affectionately known as Payamma.

Ritual lamps were lit and Hindu prayers recited as traditional funeral rites were conducted in the courtyard, respecting the faith she had practised throughout her life. A distant relative, Sajeev, performed the rites before her cremation at Eruveli crematorium.

Payamma's relationship with the family began in 2000, when Fr Jacob was grieving the death of his wife and raising his six-year-old daughter, Merin. Initially engaged to care for the child, she gradually became a cherished member of the household.

Orthodox Churches permit married men to be ordained as priests, while celibacy is the usual discipline for priests in the Latin Catholic Church.

Orphaned at nine, Payamma had worked as a domestic helper for over three decades before joining the priest's family. In the years that followed, she became a maternal presence, helping Fr Jacob raise his daughter.

"She stayed with us over the last 26 years and had gradually turned into a member of the house," Fr Jacob said.

Merin affectionately called her "Payamma". When Merin married nine years ago, the elderly caregiver stood beside her in a mother's role — an expression of the bond they had formed.

Throughout her years in the Christian household, Payamma freely practised her Hindu faith. She observed traditional customs, including Vishukani during Vishu celebrations, with the family respecting her beliefs.

That respect continued in the arrangements for her farewell. For Fr Jacob, honouring her religious traditions was a natural response to the woman who had shared his family's life for so long.

Neighbours remembered Payamma as a motherly figure to children in the area. She remained active in household work until shortly before her death, maintaining the familiar routines through which she had cared for others.

The story drew praise on social media, with many describing it as an example of communal harmony and gratitude. Some called it the "real Kerala story", pointing to the relationships that can grow across religious differences.

Among those responding, Sumit Chakraborty wrote: "Every right-thinking human being would do the same, whether Christian, Hindu, or Muslim."

Asked why he had arranged Hindu funeral rites at his home, Fr Jacob offered a simple explanation.

"As she had been following Hindu beliefs, I made arrangements to conduct her last rites in Hindu customs. I didn't even feel like doing anything different," he said. **Matters India**

MEMORIAM

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

6th 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.

In Loving Memory of



Mary Angelina De Cruz nee Compez
Departed: 19.10.2025
1st Anniversary

Anthony Simon De Cruz
Departed: 21.10.1978
48th Anniversary

Hardly had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves.
Song of Solomon 3:4

Deeply loved and fondly remembered by Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all your loved ones.

23rd 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.



JOSEPH FRANCIS
19th October 1998

28 years have passed, yet your smile remains a solace.

May you rest in eternal peace in God's loving embrace.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid."
John 14:27

NOTICE

The cost for placing a memoriam is RM150 per column.

For enquiries, please contact us:

Tel/WhatApp: **03-2026 8291**

Email: **memoriam@herald.com.my**

In Loving Memory of

10th Anniversary **35th Anniversary**



R. Anthonysamy
Departed: 13/10/2016



Michael Peter Anthonysamy
Departed: 29/6/1991

Our hearts will always love and cherish you.

Deeply missed and always remembered by Loved ones.



EDEN
FUNERAL

013 311 5722
012 648 5722

Eden Funeral Berhad (1231308-D)
Jalan 51A / 229, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
www.edenfuneral.com
edenfuneralservice

Pre Planning

Discount Up To 30%

- Affordable Funeral Packages
- Interest Free Instalment
- Full Payment with Discount
- Competitive Monthly Commitment

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

ISSN 1394 - 3294

9 771394 329008

October 18, 2026

FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

We pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

CLICKTOPRAY
TOGETHER, WE MAKE EACH DAY DIFFERENT

Download the Click To Pray *updates now.*

Download on the App Store | ANDROID APP ON Google play



107th FEAST DAY OF
St. Jude Thaddeus
22 – 25 OCTOBER 2026

MAIN THEME

FAITH THAT BEARS FRUIT

IMAN YANG MENGHASILKAN BUAH

St. Jude Thaddeus, ora pro nobis

22 OCT 2026 THURSDAY

"I have come to bring fire"
(Lk 12 : 49)

"Aku datang untuk membawa api ke bumi"
(Lk 12 : 49)

Time : **6.15 pm**
Rosary, Novena followed by Holy Mass

Language : **Tamil & English**

Presider : **Rev. Fr. Francis Andrew**

23 OCT 2026 FRIDAY

"Bear with one another charitably"
(Eph 4 : 2)

"Hendaklah kamu selalu rendah hati, lemah lembut, dan sabar. Tunjukkanlah kasihmu dalam hal saling membantu"
(Eph 4 : 2)

Time : **6.15 pm**
Rosary, Novena followed by Holy Mass

Language : **English & Bahasa**

Presider : **Rev. Fr. Stanley Antoni**

24 OCT 2026 SATURDAY

"I rejoiced when I heard them say"
(Ps 122 : 1)

"Aku bersukacita, ketika dikatakan orang kepadaku"
(Ps 122 : 1)

Time : **6.15 pm**
Rosary, Novena followed by Holy Mass and Procession

Language : **Tamil & Bahasa**

Presider : **Rev. Fr. Simon Anand**

25 OCT 2026 SUNDAY

"Whoever loves me will keep my word"
(Jn 14 : 23)

"Sesiapa mengasihi Aku akan mentaati ajaran-Ku"
(Jn 14 : 23)

Time : **10.00 am**
Rosary, Novena followed by Holy Mass

Language : **Multilingual**

Presider : **Rev. Fr. Mark Michael**

Notes:

- Confessions will be heard half an hour before Mass from 22–25 October 2026.
- For petitions, Mass offerings and donations in honour of St. Jude Thaddeus, kindly WhatsApp the parish office at 012-6192861 or make online banking transfers to St. Jude Church (Hong Leong Bank: 13600008928).
- Those who wish to offer flowers may do so from 22–24 October 2026.
- Meals will be served after Mass.

Nota:

- Pengakuan Dosa akan dilayani setengah jam sebelum Misa dari 22–25 Oktober 2026.
- Untuk Doa Permohonan, Intensi Misa dan Sumbangan bagi menghormati Santo Yudas Tadeus, sila WhatsApp pejabat paroki di 012-6192861 atau buat pemindahan dalam talian ke akaun Gereja St. Jude (Hong Leong Bank: 13600008928).
- Mereka yang ingin mempersembahkan bunga boleh berbuat demikian dari 22–24 Oktober 2026.
- Jamuan Kasih akan disediakan selepas Misa.

CHURCH OF ST. JUDE, GOPENG

Jalan Besar, Kg Tersusun Kopisan Baru, 31600 Gopeng, Perak

Published by The Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur on behalf of the Bishops of Peninsular Malaysia, HERALD, APC, 5 Jalan Robertson, 50150 Kuala Lumpur and printed by Vivar Printing Sdn. Bhd., Lot 25, Rawang Integrated Ind. Park, Mukim Rawang, Jalan Batu Arang, 48000 Rawang, Selangor.