

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

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For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

Hebr 5:1-2



Young priests gather in Sibul

■ P4



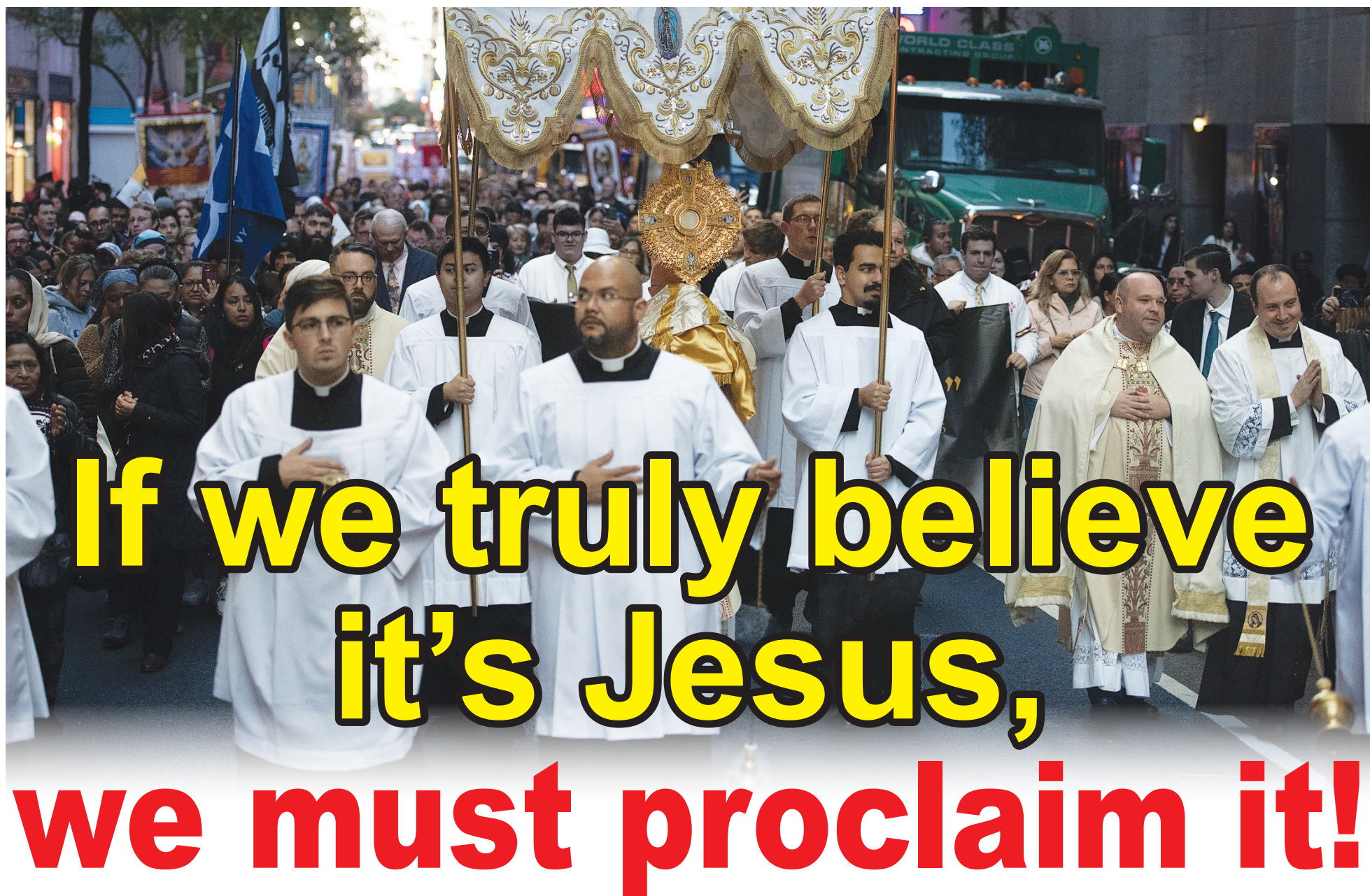
Exploring the Church's mission through scripture

■ P7



Faith, healing and restoration

■ P12



NEW YORK: On October 15, thousands of Catholics gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City for a Eucharistic procession organised by the Napa Institute. The event, now in its fifth year, attracted an estimated 3,500 participants from across New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, and Westchester County.

The day began with a Holy Hour and rosary led by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Espallat, followed by Mass celebrated by Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, with Monsignor James Shea delivering the homily.

After Mass, the congregation took to the streets of Midtown Manhattan, processing with the Eucharist past iconic landmarks such as Radio City Music Hall and Times Square. This public display of faith brought a moment of reverence to one of the city's busiest areas. Participants shared their experiences of peace and unity as they walked through the city blocks, where traffic came to a standstill.

Bishop Espallat, of Dominican descent, gave a meditation during the Holy Hour in English and Spanish.

"As a society, what are we passionate about? Then I ask individually, what are you passionate about, personally?" Espallat said.

"My sisters and brother in Christ, we were Christ's passion. We are Christ's passion. Jesus was, is, and continues to be passionate about his Father and his kingdom."

Espallat spoke about the need to not only be hearers of the word but also doers of the word.

"Most Catholics like to come to church for 30-40 minutes. Then boom! Out the door. Are we really creating community? Are we really creating family? Are we really passionate about Christ and his kingdom?" he asked.

"If we really believe that that's Jesus — then we need to proclaim it! We can't keep it to ourselves anymore. We need to shout it from the mountain tops! We need to declare it with how we live," he said.

"Some of you took half days off from your jobs. I commend you," the bishop said. "That's why we come here today to church. Your boss sees it, your co-worker sees it. And guess what: Today the city of New York will

also see it!"

During the Mass, Archbishop Coakley offered prayers for peace in the Holy Land. In his homily, Monsignor Shea reflected on the struggle many face in fully trusting God. He spoke about the tendency to hold back in living out one's faith, urging believers to trust God completely, even when it involves great suffering and joy. Shea also shared the story of St Isaac Jogues, the first Catholic priest to set foot on Manhattan Island, whose statue adorns the door of St Patrick's Cathedral. He reminded the faithful that everything they do should be for the glory of God.

As the Eucharistic procession made its way through Manhattan, participants were struck by the reverence and respect shown by onlookers. Debby Kruszewski from Mamaroneck, New York, reflected on how many bystanders watched from their windows. "I wonder who among them is a believer, and who was drawn to the window by His presence," she mused, expressing hope that this public display of faith would lead to a life-changing moment for some. Kristy Schade from Larchmont echoed these sentiments, emphasising the peace and power she felt as part of the procession.

One memorable interaction came when a bystander impatiently asked a police officer how long the procession would take. The officer responded simply, "It's Jesus. It will take as long as it needs to." Such moments highlighted the quiet impact of the event on the city.

Maria Baldi, an Italian attendee, compared the procession to those she had experienced in her home country. She was particularly moved by the strong presence of Hispanic Catholics leading many of the songs and prayers. Baldi also noted how peaceful the event was, despite her initial expectation that there might be negative reactions from the public.

The procession concluded with a benediction by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, followed by the veneration of a first-class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a young saint known for his devotion to the Eucharist. The relic, a piece of Acutis' heart, added a profound spiritual dimension to the event. The Eucharistic procession through New York City served as a powerful reminder of the strength of faith in a bustling urban landscape. CNA

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Pope Francis to release 'first memoir published by a sitting pontiff'

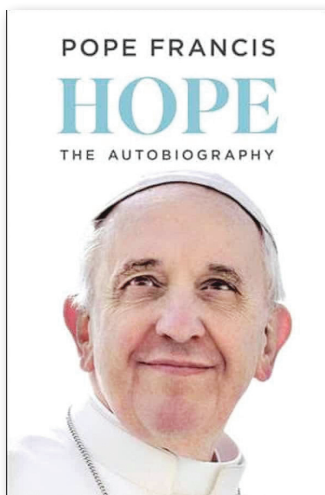
In January 2025, Pope Francis will become the first sitting pontiff to publish an autobiographical memoir, which will be titled *Hope (pic)*.

Random House Publishing announced the memoir's unprecedented global release on Oct 16. The original plan, according to the publisher, had been to release the memoir after his death. However, the Pope decided to publish it in light of the upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope.

A jubilee year occurs every 25 years in the Catholic Church — although the Holy Father can declare them more often — and is a year of special grace and pilgrimage for members of the faithful.

The memoir, which the Holy Father began work on in March 2019, will be available in more than 80 countries on Jan 14, 2025.

"The book of my life is the story of a journey of hope, a journey that I cannot separate from the journey of my family, of my people, of all God's people. In every page, in every passage, it is also the book of those who have travelled with me, of those who came before, of those



who will follow," Pope Francis is quoted as saying in a Random House press release.

"An autobiography is not our own private story but rather the baggage we carry with us," the pontiff continued. "And memory is not just what we recall but what surrounds us. It doesn't speak only about what has been but about what will be. It seems like yesterday, and yet it's tomorrow. All is born to blossom in an eternal springtime. In the end, we will say only: 'I don't recall anything in which You are not there.'"

The announcement of the memoir comes after Francis' last book, *Life: My Story Through History*, was published in March of this year. In that book, the Holy Father recounted his experience of major historical events including the 1976 Argentina coup d'etat, the conclave that elected him pope, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Hope," according to Random House, offers a unique perspective from the pontiff and contains "a wealth of revelations and unpublished stories" in which his own life is

the principal focus.

Co-written with Carlo Musso, founder of the independent Italian publishing house Libreria Pienogiorno, the memoir begins with the history of Francis' family and their emigration from Italy to Latin America. It then proceeds through his childhood, adult life, vocational story, and the whole of his papacy to the present day.

As EWTN Vice President and Editorial Director Matthew Bunson commented earlier this year in the wake of several high-profile interviews by the pope and the release of "Life," Francis' presence in the media is not unique; his "deliberate and aggressive embrace of interview for television, radio, newspapers, and magazines" and eagerness to communicate on his own behalf is.

"Francis has forged his own path in communication and in governance," Bunson wrote in a May 20 op-ed in the *National Catholic Register*, CNA's sister news partner. "He is trying to shape how the world perceives him, how his reforms are received and implemented, and how permanent his programme for the Church will be."

"He unquestionably stands in continuity with the modern popes in his embrace of the media," Bunson added, "but he is unprecedented in the way he goes about it." **Madalaine Elhabbal, CNA**

The Lord helps us see things in their true light

Imagine this: a large crowd gathered at an airport during an emergency evacuation. People are rushing to board the last flight out of a danger zone. But amidst the panic, rescuers spot an elderly woman in a wheelchair, struggling to make it through. Instead of passing by, they stop, make room for her, and ensure she gets on that flight, even though the plane is nearly full. This act of compassion reminds us that in times of crisis, no one should be left behind.

In the scripture readings, we see the work of redemption as a journey where no one is forgotten. This is described as a new Exodus, a pilgrimage where the weak, sick, and helpless are all invited to join. The First Reading, from the Prophet Jeremiah, tells of the gathering of the scattered Israelites from exile—a new Exodus. The language of this reading refers to the exiles Israel underwent, always involving exile to the "north" of the Promised Land. Jeremiah is addressing the Babylonian exile in particular. The Israelites were exiled due to their sins, just as sin alienates us from God and others. This new Exodus represents not just a physical journey, but a spiritual one, where even the most vulnerable will make it. Mothers with their children, the blind, the lame — everyone will be able to join because God Himself will make their way smooth. Water will flow abundantly for them, not like the harsh conditions of the first Exodus from Egypt. And yet, not everyone returns. Those who stay behind do so because they choose not to come, not because the journey is too hard. They let the opportunity pass.

Jeremiah also describes the remnant returning as an immense throng. The faithful remnant of Israel was the seed from which the new People of God, the Church, began.

This prophecy does not just refer to the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian exile; it also looks forward to the Church assembling and heading in pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

In the Second Reading, from the Letter to the Hebrews, we are reminded that Jesus, our High Priest, became one of us to lead us on this journey of reconciliation. In becoming human, He knew firsthand the struggles of living in a fallen world. He felt the weakness of our condition. And because He understands our struggles, He is the bridge between us and God. Through Him, our humanity is restored, and we are reconciled with God.

Then, in the Gospel, we see this prophecy unfolding. Jesus begins to gather the people, healing them, leading them, and restoring their sight — both physically and spiritually. The crowds are following Him out of Jericho, a city often associated with sin. In Biblical symbolism moving away from Jericho is often considered as symbolic journey away from sin, especially when heading towards Jerusalem. In the middle of this excitement, there is Bartimaeus, a blind beggar. Stuck in his blindness, he can't follow Jesus on his own. But when he hears that Jesus is passing by, he cries out for mercy. Even though the crowd tries to silence him, he persists, and Jesus responds. Jesus not only restores Bartimaeus' sight but invites him to join the journey.

The blindness of Bartimaeus is symbolic. Though physically blind, he sees more clearly than those around him. The crowd, blinded by their assumptions, tries to quiet him. But Bartimaeus sees what they do not: the opportunity to be healed and to follow Jesus.

In the Gospel, Our Lord helps Bartimaeus to see things in a new light, but he also helps

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Sixtus Pitah OFM

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Readings: *Jeremiah 31:7-9;*

Hebrews 5:1-6;

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

his disciples see things in a new light as well. You may have come across on the Internet, videos of little children with impaired vision putting on glasses for the first time: sometimes they fuss as the glasses are put on, but their faces go from confusion, to wonder, to joy! There are also videos of adults suffering from colour blindness who receive as a gift from their loved ones a pair of glasses that, unbeknownst to them, corrects their colour blindness. Imagine seeing the world in colour for the first time. It's not by chance that Our Lord calls himself the Light of the World. He helps us see things in their true light.

There are moments when we, too, are blind—blind to the needs of others or even blind to our own need for healing. We can get stuck, unsure of how to move forward. Like Bartimaeus, we need to cry out to Jesus for mercy, asking Him to restore our sight and help us see the way forward. Jesus, the Light of the World, helps us see things as they really are and shows us the path we are meant to walk.

In life's journey, no one is meant to be left behind. Just as the rescuers made room for the elderly woman at the airport, Jesus makes room for each of us, no matter our condition. And just as He did for Bartimaeus, He offers us new sight, a new way to live, and the opportunity to join Him on the journey of redemption. Let us follow Him and ensure that no one is left behind.

Archbishop Simon Poh accepts state honour for Sarawak Catholic Church

KUCHING: In conjunction with the 78th birthday celebration of Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak Tun Pehin Sri Dr Haji Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, Archbishop Simon Poh of the Archdiocese of Kuching, received the Darjah Panglima Setia Bintang Sarawak (PSBS) award which carries the title 'Dato'.

The investiture took place on October 12 at the Astana Negeri, where the archbishop expressed gratitude to the Sarawak Government and shared his acceptance message, emphasising the significance of faith and community service.

Archbishop Dato' Dr Simon Poh highlighted the honour of accepting the PSBS award on behalf of the Catholic Church in Sarawak, recognising the contributions made by the Archdiocese of Kuching, Diocese of Sibü, and Diocese of Miri. He noted the impact of

62 Catholic mission schools across Sarawak, which have provided education to thousands of children, particularly in rural communities.

The archbishop also acknowledged the collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Sarawak Government in delivering welfare services. During the pandemic, he stated that the Church worked closely with the Sarawak Disaster Management Committee to implement safety protocols and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in rural areas.

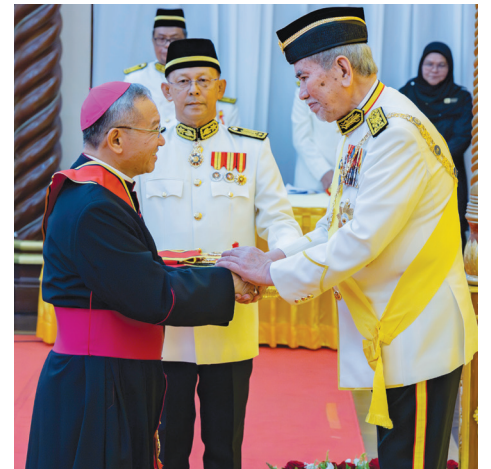
In partnership with UNIFOR and the Islamic Information Centre (IIC), Archbishop Simon has fostered interfaith dialogue and cooperation among religious leaders to promote harmony and understanding within the community.

On behalf of his fellow bishops — Bishop

Joseph Hii of Sibü and Bishop Richard Ng of Miri — the archbishop extended gratitude to the Governor and Sarawak Government for their recognition of the Church's contributions. He reaffirmed the Catholic Church's commitment to nation-building and fostering mutual respect and acceptance among all communities in Sarawak.

He urged Catholics and Christians to persist in their community-building efforts, working together for the common good of Sarawak and Malaysia.

In a personal message to his congregation, Archbishop Simon requested that he continue to be addressed simply as "Archbishop Simon Poh" without the title of 'Dato' or 'Dr' during Mass and church functions, emphasising his role as a shepherd to the faithful entrusted to his care.



Archbishop Simon Poh with Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak Tun Pehin Sri Dr Haji Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar.



The children during one of the football matches.

Children's Day celebration in Kg Tekir

SEREMBAN: Childhood is a blessing and one of the most joyful phases of life. In celebration of this, Children's Day came early for the kids of Kg Sebir in Labu, Seremban, on October 12.

The Women's Ministry of the Church of the Visitation led the celebration, collaborating with the Orang Asli Ministry, Migrant Ministry, and Creation Justice Ministry. The event kicked off with a warm-up session led by Audrey Dass, followed by a lively mini football tournament, with Fr Xavier Andrew,

the parish priest, taking the first kick.

The small field next to the chapel was adorned with colourful bunting, adding to the festive atmosphere. The children's excitement grew when Fr Xavier personally greeted them, shaking hands and sharing in their joy. It was a day full of energy, with both children and parents playing games and dancing with enthusiasm.

The dedicated volunteers from the Women's Ministry, led by Annie Naden, also provided a delicious meal for everyone. Each child

received presents, goody bags, and had the chance to participate in a lucky draw together with their parents.

The event was a resounding success, brimming with fun, laughter, and community spirit. The Women's Ministry coordinator and event manager, Gloria Jagannathan, extended her heartfelt thanks to the generous donors, Fr Xavier, and the teams from the Orang Asli, Migrant, and Creation Justice ministries for their collaboration. She hopes for more joint efforts in the future. **Eddie JC**

PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

October

31 Opening of Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Permatang Tinggi at 9.30am

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

October / November

31/10 Permanent Deacons' Study Day & Renewal of Promises – MAJODI Centre

2/11 Blessing of graves at Catholic Cemetery Ulu Tiram

2/11 Confirmation – Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram at 6.00pm

5/11 AGM – Catholic Welfare Services (CWS), Penang

6/11 Meeting – Bishops' Seminary, Penang

9/11 Confirmation – Church of Christ the King, Kulai at 6.00pm

Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #195

Greetings dear friends of MJD.
The Synod on Synodality is into its third week. The Church is in prayer, seeking God's forgiveness for her sins. A week of storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, disasters, drone wars, loss of lives and homelessness. Government debt went up to RM1.173 trillion in 2023, says Auditor-General. Celcom, Digi and IJN are considering price hikes. The GST may be reintroduced. Mufti Bill worries many — are fatwas issued by muftis a religious advice or a legal ruling or an infringement of human rights or more binding than existing laws? The PM assures the independence of the Judiciary. Are assurances and promises binding?

Healing Times: On Tuesday, before the second session of the Synod on Synodality, Pope Francis said: "Sin is always a wound in relationships; our relationship with God, our relationships with our brothers and sisters. How could we be credible in mission if we do not recognise and acknowledge our mistakes and bend down to heal the wounds we have caused by our sins?"

The late Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu spearheaded the healing of the Republic of South Africa, after the collapse of apartheid, with the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation. St Catharine of Genoa said "Renewal without conversion is

corruption of the Church". Remembering a hymn from my seminary days: "The world stands in need of liberation". Broken world, broken nations, broken people, broken families and broken lives — they await a healer, a healing. Where will they come from? Who will bring it? A spirit of "communion that converts" empowers us to listen, learn, love and heal the world.

A Thought For The Week: Black Balloon.
A man was selling balloons at a fair. He had balloons of all colours, including red, yellow, blue, and green. Whenever business was slow, he would release a helium-filled balloon into the air, and when the children saw it go up, they all wanted to buy one. His sales soared. One day, he felt someone tugging at his jacket. He turned around and saw a little boy who asked, "If you release a black balloon, would that also fly?" Moved by the boy's concern, the man replied with empathy, "Son, it is not the colour of the balloon; it is what is inside that makes it go up." The lesson from the balloon man: It is what is inside that counts — it's our attitude. Our attitudes can make us rise. That is the reason why some individuals, organisations, or countries are more successful than others.

our sins?

- Sin implies culpability or personal fault, that we are separated and are punished for our sins. But this is an illusion that many of us have to overcome.
- Religion's primary task is to communicate UNION, reconnecting people to their original identity ie "hidden with Christ in God". It is not about being moral to be loved by God. It is about experiencing God's love to be moral. Before original sin was original grace.
- It is strange that our mistakes lead us to God. Jesus and Paul believed that necessary transgression, and the need for mercy that follows, is the pattern for transformation. (Some thoughts from Fr Richard Rohr)

See The Holy Spirit @ Work: We're all assigned a piece of the garden, a corner of the universe that is ours to transform. Our corner of the universe is our own life — our relationships, our homes, our work, our current circumstances — exactly as they are. Every situation we find ourselves in is an opportunity, perfectly planned by the Holy Spirit, to teach love instead of fear." **Marianne Williamson**

Something To Tickle You: The greater your knowledge of the goodness and grace of God in your life, the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm. **Matt Chandler**

Bishop Bernard Paul

QnQ? Q ask: SIN? Are we punished for our sins or are we punished by

Young priests gather in Sibiu

Fr Sixtus Pitah, OFM

SIBU, Sarawak: Forty-two priests from the 10 arch/dioceses across the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei gathered for the annual Young Priest Gathering (YPG). The event, held from October 7 to 11 and hosted by the Diocese of Sibiu, brought together clergy ordained for less than five years, for a time of fellowship and formation.

The five-day programme opened with a Eucharistic celebration at the Sibiu Diocese Pastoral Centre, presided over by Bishop Richard Ng of the Miri Diocese, who oversaw the YPG.

The YPG 2024 programme was divided into two key parts — formation for the young clergy and an excursion to the local community within the Sibiu Diocese, particularly in the Mukah District.

The formation sessions centred on the Church's current theme of Synodality. Fr Ivan Fang spoke on the role of the Synodal Priest, while Fr Joseph Sebastian shared his personal experience in this capacity. James Lau offered a layperson's perspective on Synodality, drawing from his involvement in the Neo-Catechumenate community.

The excursion brought the young priests



The young priests at Mass.

to the Mukah District, where they were hosted by 20 local Melanau families across five chapels under the parish of Sts Peter and Paul, Mukah. These foster families took their adopted 'clergy-children' on sightseeing tours around the kampung, held prayer sessions, shared their faith, and celebrated evening Mass in each chapel, fol-

lowed by community celebrations with the local people.

During the Mass at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul, celebrated by Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibiu Diocese, the local ordinary, in his homily, encouraged the clergy to befriend their bishops and share any concerns they might have, so that their bishops could

provide advice and offer the necessary support to the young clergy.

After Mass, the young clergy visited an Iban longhouse in Ulu Diji, Selangau, hosted by Tamin State Assemblyman Christopher Gira and Tuai Rumah Simond Boom. There, they celebrated Mass, performed house blessings, and joined in the celebrations with the longhouse families.

During the visit to the longhouse, Fr Michel Dass of the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese, representing the young clergy, outlined the multiple aims of the YPG — to provide a platform for young priests to learn about local customs and engage with the community; to strengthen bonds among the clergy and various Catholic communities within the Bishops' Conference; to promote vocations, and to reach out to students preparing to study abroad, ensuring they remain connected to the Church while away from their families.

Madam Florence Holita Bernard Miran, one of the foster family heads, expressed her gratitude to the clergy for selecting Mukah as the excursion venue. She shared that the clergy host family programme, though brief, had deeply enriched the families involved in many meaningful ways.

Keningau diocese honours Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu

KENINGAU: Mountains are often mentioned in the Bible as places where individuals encounter God. For instance, Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19). Likewise, Mary is seen as a guide to encountering God, particularly on Calvary Hill, where Jesus was crucified (John 19:25-27).

On September 30, Bishop Cornelius Piong presided over a Eucharistic celebration to mark the opening of the Rosary Month and the launch of the honorary title of Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu. The Mass began with a *sumazau* dance, followed by a procession featuring an impressive 30-inch picture of Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu, elegantly covered in blue cloth.

Once the picture was placed on the altar, the cloth was removed, and Bishop Cornelius blessed the image, assisted by Fr Joseph Gapitang and Fr Appolonius Yakis.

In his homily, Bishop Cornelius shared that the inspiration for the title Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu originated from the recent Sabah Youth Day-6 held in Keningau. He noted that Sabah boasts several popular icons and landmarks recognised both locally and internationally, suggesting it is fitting to honour the Mother of God with such a significant landmark, similar to Our

Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima.

The bishop emphasised, "I believe that those who are devoted to Mother Mary have experienced her help. The wedding at Cana, where the hosts ran out of wine, demonstrates her compassion and care. Running out of wine symbolises the loss of joy. Pray to Our Lady for the restoration of joy in families and communities, as wine represents joy."

He further reflected, "Since the Diocese of Keningau was established 31 years ago, Mother Mary has always walked with the people of this diocese." Bishop Cornelius expressed his hope that young Catholics in Sabah would emulate Our Lady's faith, inspired by the SYD-6 theme, *Mary arose and went with haste*, encouraging them to spread the Lord's Good News and be the salt and light of Christ wherever they go.

The artwork of Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu was created by Didroy Joneh, Chairman of the Social Communication Commission of the Diocese of Keningau, and digitally rendered by Eva Glenn Robert from the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu.

After the Eucharist, the congregation viewed a video catechesis prepared by Fr David Gasikol, explaining the significance of honouring the Mother of Christ as Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu. **Liza Magnus**



Bishop Cornelius Piong blessing the Our Lady of Mount Kinabalu artwork.

Blessing of graves, columbariums in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

Rawang and Batu Arang

7.00am Mass at Rawang. (Eng, Tamil and Mandarin)
8.00am Blessing of Columbarium
9.00am Blessing of graves at Batu Arang
10.30am Blessing of graves at Hulu Yam Baru
11.00am Blessing of graves at Serendah
11.30am Blessing of graves at Sg. Choh
12.30pm Blessing of graves at Rawang.

Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Cameron Highlands

8.30am Multilingual Mass.

10.00am Blessing of graves

Church of St Paul of the Apostle, Kuala Kubu Bahru

8.00am Blessing of graves

Pahang / Terengganu District Church of the Annunciation, Raub

12.45pm Blessing of graves (After Mass in Raub)

9.00am Mass and Blessing of graves at Bentong cemetery

Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mentakab

10.00am Blessing of graves at Batu 5 Cemetery

7.30pm Blessing of Church Columbarium followed by Mass

Negeri District Xiao En Memorial Park, Nilai.

Blessings of graves Mass (at the Park)

Church of St Aloysius, Mantin.

8.30am 5.00 Multilingual
10.00am Sunset Mass (praying

for the souls) followed by blessing of graves.

KL Central District

Church of St Anthony

3.00pm Blessing of graves at Loke Yew Cemetery

KL South District

Church of the Sacred Heart, KL

9.00am Mass followed by blessing of graves at the Cheras Christian Cemetery

Church of the Holy Family, Kajang.

7.00am Mass at church

7.30am Blessing of graves at Holy Family Catholic Cemetery

Klang District

Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Klang.

9.00am Mass in Meru Cemetery, followed by blessing of graves

2.00pm Mass in Langat Cemetery, followed by blessing of graves

Penang diocese holds dialogue with Catholic Safeguarding Institute

BUTTERWORTH, Penang: Cardinal Sebastian Francis recently welcomed Dr Gabriel Dy-Liacco, Founder-President of the Catholic Safeguarding Institute (CSI) of Manila, and Msgr Ramon Masculino, CSI's Director for Ecclesial Relations and Safeguarding Specialist, at the Catholic Diocesan Centre. The October 10 meeting also included members from the Professional Standards Office (PSO) Penang, fostering dialogue on child protection and safeguarding initiatives.

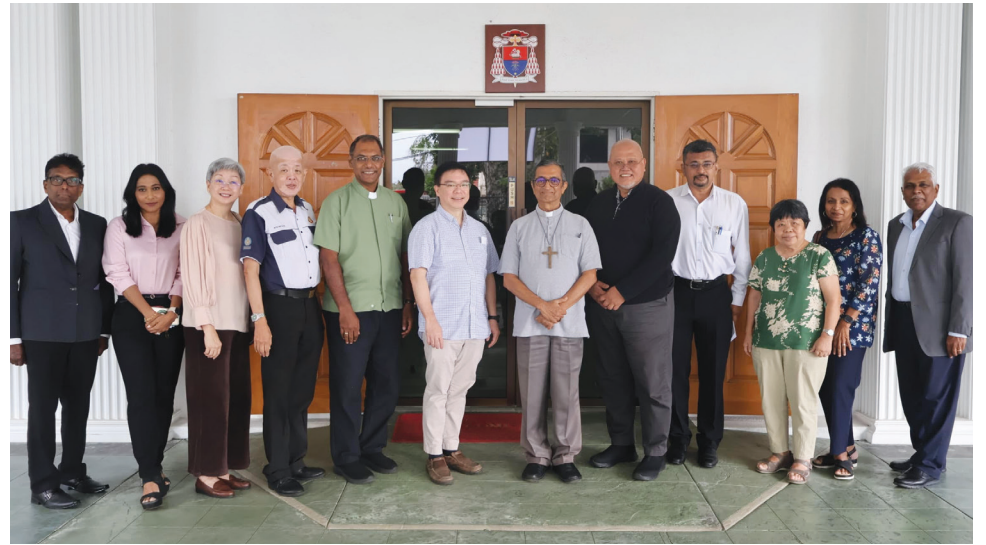
In his opening address, Cardinal Sebastian emphasised the importance of the PSO's work in protecting children and vulnerable individuals, expressing his desire for the session to be both challenging and thought-provoking. Drawing from his experience at the Global Vatican Summit 2019, he reiterated the principles of "Take Responsibility, Have Accountability, and Ensure Transparency" as foundational to safeguarding efforts.

During the meeting, Dato' Dominic Selvam, Chairperson of PSO Penang, presented the Diocese Child Protection Manual titled *Keeping and Restoring*

Communion. He outlined the complaint process, including the flowchart for handling complaints, conducting inquiries, and forwarding findings to the Bishop of Penang. Christopher Kushi shared that PSO Penang has established an office at the Diocesan Centre for interviewing complainants and witnesses, ensuring confidentiality in their files. He also highlighted ongoing awareness programmes aimed at safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons within parishes, church ministries, and lay organisations.

Dr Gabriel stressed the necessity for the Church to recognise potential paedophiles, support victims, and act decisively when abuse cases are discovered. Msgr Ramon Masculino, a safeguarding spirituality expert, emphasised the need for a theological and personal understanding of safeguarding issues. He also advised the PSO Penang team to develop a checklist based on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) document titled *Universal Guidelines Framework*, dated March 2024, to assess the diocese's compliance.

The session concluded with the solemn



oath-taking of Fr Martin Arlando as the Bishop's Delegate on the PSO Committee. The committee members include Dr Mary Bharathy (Psychiatrist); Saralla Chettiar (Clinical Psychologist); Agnes Wong (Accountant); Arthur Yeong (Lawyer); Simon Murali (Lawyer); Bernadette Teh (Education Council Delegate); PR

Selvarajan (Tamil language), and Jael Tan (Mandarin Language).

For any safeguarding matters related to minors and vulnerable persons in the Diocese of Penang, inquiries can be directed via email to martandrews@gmail.com or kushikostka8@gmail.com, or by phone at 05-7102220 or 012-4883303.

Segamat parish hosts medical camp

SEGAMAT, Johor: The grounds of the Church of St Philip buzzed with activity on October 13 as parishioners and members of the Segamat community took part in a 'Medical Camp' organised by the Parish Office of Human Development (POHD).

Led by POHD Chairman James Paul Raj and Louis Vincent from the Post Centennial Celebration Committee, the event brought together a team of medical professionals from the Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia Segamat District, who provided free health screenings and dental check-ups for the parishioners and local residents. The comprehensive health services included general screenings for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and lung function, as well as specialised checks for women, such as PAP smears, breast examinations, and consultations on related health issues.

In conjunction with the medical camp, a successful blood donation drive was held, where staff from the Blood Transfusion Department screened and collected donations. Approximately 70 individuals registered to donate blood, including members of the Armed Forces from the Syed Sirajuddin Army Camp in Gemas, police personnel from the Segamat Police District Headquarters, and teachers from Canossian Convent School, many accompanied by their spouses. Notably, participation also included members of non-Catholic churches, and it



Fr Adrian Francis donating blood for a good cause.

was heartwarming to see some individuals from the Malay Muslim community of Segamat willing to enter the church grounds to donate blood and undergo health screenings.

St Philip's assistant parish priest, Fr Adrian Francis registered as a blood donor as well.

Parish priest Fr Paul Wong expressed his delight at the success of the Medical Camp and thanked the Post Centennial Celebration Committee and POHD for their hard work.

This event is part of the lead-up to the closing of St Philip's Centennial Celebration, scheduled for May 3, 2025.

The organisers extend their gratitude to all who participated, with special thanks to the Commandant of the Syed Sirajuddin Army Camp, the Headmistress of Canossian Convent Segamat, and the Officer in Charge of Segamat Police District Headquarters for encouraging their personnel to join this initiative. **Richard Joseph**

Neophytes give back to society

PENANG: The Risen Christ Catholic Church, Air Itam, successfully organised a blood donation drive on Malaysia Day at the Fr Peter Shyu Hall, in collaboration with the Penang Hospital Blood Bank. The event, held from 9.00am to 3.00pm., was spearheaded by the 2023-2024 RCIA baptised neophytes as part of their



Mystagogy stage, marking a significant act of giving back to the community.

Nearly 80 donors participated, contributing to the Penang Hospital Blood Bank's critical supply. This initiative not only reflected the Church's commitment to social outreach but also served as a meaningful way to celebrate Malaysia Day, highlighting unity and care for the well-being of fellow Malaysians.

The RCIA neophytes, having recently completed their faith journey, embraced this opportunity to live out their faith in action. The church, in partnership with the Penang Hospital Blood Bank, expressed heartfelt thanks to all donors and volunteers who helped ensure the success of the event. **Nicholas Chin**

Blessing of graves, columbariums in the Diocese of Malacca Johore

North Central Johore Vicariate

Church of St Louis, Kluang

8.00am Multilingual Mass followed by blessing of graves

Church of St Peter, Mersing

10.00am Mass (BM/E) followed by blessing of graves

Church of St Henry, Batu Pahat

8.00am Mass at the cemetery followed by blessing of graves

Church of St Andrew, Muar

9.00am Multilingual Mass at the cemetery followed by blessing of graves

Church of St Matthew, Tangkak

7.30am Blessing of graves
8.00am Mass in Mandarin

Church of St Anthony, Chaah

5.30pm Blessing of graves
7.00pm Mass in Tamil

South Johore Vicariate

Church of the Immaculate Conception, JB

7.15am Mass in English followed by blessing of graves at Larkin Cemetery

Church of Christ the King, Kulai

9.00am Mass at blessing of graves

Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram

8.30am Multilingual Mass and blessing of graves

Malacca Vicariate

Church of the Holy Spirit, Jasin

9.00am

Chapel of St James, Merlimau

11.00 am

Empowered by faith — insights from Alpha

Ruby Jayasuria

KUALA LUMPUR: The Church of the Good Shepherd, Setapak, hosted Alpha in the Catholic Context for English-speaking participants from August 1 to October 3. The group included a diverse mix of youth, adults, and seniors, with backgrounds ranging from bankers and lawyers to entrepreneurs and IT specialists. The key takeaway for the entire group was the discovery of the Holy Spirit.

Almost all attendees of this session attested that, despite joining Alpha without prior knowledge of the agenda, their weekly attendance over the 12 weeks has been the most blessed, enlightening, and relaxing experience they've had.

The insights gained from Alpha for Catholics revolve around relearning what we may have forgotten. As cradle Catholics, there is often a sense of complacency and superiority, leading us to believe that we already know everything about our faith.

Alpha provided us with a check and balance of our knowledge and faith. Many important facts were forgotten as we leave catechism classes and move to adulthood. And Alpha was the grounding to bring us back to what we knew.

Participant Peter shared, "When I first joined Alpha, I had no prior knowledge about it, yet I found myself not only participating

but also becoming a host in my group. I thought it sounded interesting, but I was still unsure about what I would do and say. By the second week, I realised that Alpha is all about introducing Christ, the Bible, and the Church to those who want to learn more. While we studied these topics, it felt more like a refresher course. The group sharing was enriching; my group truly felt like a united cell — a small church."

Participant Harbans remarked, "The Alpha course is a programme where God brought us all together. The stories in the videos illustrated how Alpha is transforming so many lives. Through our group sharing, I realised how these weeks of attending Alpha have impacted our own lives as well. I believe Alpha should be shared with RCIA candidates, catechists, and all levels of ministry within the Church."

One of the key elements of Alpha that many of us discovered is the importance of invoking the forgotten God — the Holy Spirit. Fr Leo, a visiting priest from India, aptly reminded us, "We often forget that the Holy Spirit is within us. When we were baptised, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into us. As we grew older, we allowed the Holy Spirit to fall asleep within us."

We were all reminded that the Holy Spirit is our helper and our guide, and that we should invoke the Holy Spirit at all times



The participants giving their sharing in small groups.

throughout our lives.

Participant Francis shared, "Alpha is new to me. I didn't know anything about it until my wife and I were invited by Cassandra, the host and facilitator. I was thrilled to share my experiences of the Holy Spirit with my group. Referring to Revelation 3:20, I felt that when Jesus knocked, Cassandra encouraged me to open the door. I'm so glad I opened that door and joined Alpha because it allowed me to share how to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives."

Alpha also made us realise the power of our Holy Bible. Every Catholic family owns a Bible, and we often seek the most beautiful edition to display in our homes. But how many of us actually open and read it? Participant Emily captured the essence of

this experience after attending Alpha. She shared, "Like everyone here, I had heard of Alpha but didn't know much about it. I only attended out of curiosity to see what it was all about. Now, I'm so glad I did. Through my experience here, I feel closer to God than ever before. I was never particularly close to Him, but now it brings me comfort. My Bible used to be just a decorative piece on my table, but after Alpha, I've started to pick it up and read."

Alpha caters to the needs of everyone, from pre-believers, young believers, nominal believers, and lapsed believers to mature believers living up to their tagline of *Come and See to Go and Tell, where Christian communities are built, strengthened and to evangelised.*

Exploring faith through the Alpha film series



During the praise and worship session.

PENANG: The Risen Christ Catholic Church in Air Itam, recently concluded its first Alpha Film Series as part of the parish formation programme. This initiative was introduced by parish priest, Friar Esmond Chua, OFM, and his assistant, Friar Crispus Mosinoh, OFM.

The Alpha Film Series ran for 12 weeks, from July 13 to Sept 28 with sessions held every Saturday for 1.5 hours. It followed the established Alpha syllabus and included a special weekend-away retreat at the Msgr Aloysius Spirituality Centre on Penang Road, allowing participants to immerse themselves in deeper reflection.

The programme was open to all parishioners and RCIA candidates, creating a warm and welcoming space for individuals to explore the Christian faith in an open and informal setting.

A heartfelt thank you to the parish formation team for their commitment and dedication in making this programme a success. Their tireless efforts helped bring this enriching experience to life.

Looking ahead, Friar Esmond and Friar Crispus are eager to make the Alpha Film Series a yearly event as part of our parish's outreach, continuing to grow our community and strengthen our faith. **Nicholas Chin**

Blessing of graves, columbariums in the Diocese of Penang

Penang Island

Church of the Immaculate Conception, Pulau Tikus
7.30am - Kelawai Road
9.30am - Western Road

Church of the Holy Name of Jesus, Balik Pulau
3.00pm

Northern Deanery

Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
10.00 am

Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Kangar
8.30am

Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Permatang Tinggi
9.00am

Church of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
10.00am Kepala Batas Cemetery
4.00pm Butterworth Cemetery

Church of St Anthony, Nibong Tebal :
10.30am

Church of Our Lady of Good Health, Parit Buntar :
10.00am

Church of St Joseph, Bagan Serai :
After the 5.00pm Mass

Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Kulim :
Pagar Tras
8.00am Mass in Chinese followed by cemetery blessing

BMR estate
10:30am Mass in Tamil followed by cemetery blessing of BMR and Bkt. Sidim

4.00pm Padang Tembak cemetery blessing follow by Mass at 5.00pm.

Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani :
9.30am

Church of St Michael, Alor Setar :
After the 10.00am Mass

Church of Our Lady of Fatima of the Holy Rosary, Kelantan

Will only know the timing depending on the availability of the priest assigned

Perak Deanery

Taiping Catholic Church :
After the 8.00am Mass

Church of St Patrick, Kuala Kangsar :
No fixed time, depending on Fr Mark Michael's availability

Church of St John the Baptist, Sungai Siput :
No fixed time, depending on Fr Mark Michael's availability

Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Silibin :
After the 9.00am Mass

Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh Garden :
9.00am

Church of St Joseph, Batu Gajah :
9.00am

Church of St Jude Gopeng :
12 noon on November 3

Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar :
9.00am and 6.00pm

Church of St Mary, Tapah :
After the 8.30am Mass

Church of St Anthony, Teluk Intan :
Before the 7.00pm Mass

Church of the Most Holy Redeemer, Tanjung Malim :
No specific date and time yet.

Church of St Francis de Sales, Sitiawan :
After the 8.00am Mass

Church of St Michael, Ipoh :
Before the 9.00am Mass

Church of the Immaculate Conception, Changlun :
8.30am

Exploring the Church's mission through scripture

Dianne Kuseela Devi

KUALA LUMPUR: A spiritually enriching session titled *Church on Mission in the Bible* was presented by Msgr James Gnanapiragasam on October 12, at the Church of St Joseph, Sentul. The session was attended by participants from parishes within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.



Msgr James began with an introduction to the notion of Mission and how the concept of Church on Mission can be traced throughout the Bible, emphasising the idea that the church is called to proclaim

the Gospel and serve others in the world.

He emphasised the importance of attentive textual reading and highlighted key chapters in the Bible to understand how the entire Scripture presents the theme of mission. From Genesis to the Exile in the Old Testament, and from the Acts of the Apostles to Revelation in the New Testament, these passages illustrate the overarching message that the Church, as the new Israel, is called to be actively engaged in the world — sharing the Gospel and demonstrating God's love through action. Msgr James also elaborated on how the Bible, as a whole, unfolds from a mission-oriented perspective.

On the theme of *Communion and*

Mission Ecclesiology, Msgr James underscored the emphasis on mission as outlined in the Vatican II documents. He noted that “the task of evangelising all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church,” a mission made even more urgent by the challenges of today's society (EN#14). Quoting German Bishop Walter Kasper, he added, “Gathering and sending forth are two poles that must not be separated,” reinforcing the Church's dual responsibility to foster communion while actively engaging in mission.

Participants, in groups, discussed how the liturgies in their parishes reflect the Church as a communion of disciples and how their faith communities equip members to effectively carry out the Church's



mission in the world.

Abel, a participant from the Church of St Joseph, shared that the breakdown of the Bible, as explained during the session, was truly an eye-opener. He noted that when studying the Bible, it's easy to miss the deep connections between the Old and New Testaments. The group discussions provided a valuable opportunity to explore how individual Catholics, with the support of their parish, can move

towards becoming missionary disciples.

Ian Pereira, from the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, expressed his appreciation for the talk on the Bible's mission journey from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He particularly valued the call to become a community of disciples, emphasising not only the enrichment of individual spirituality but also the importance of evangelising.



Rosary-making workshop for the Deaf

PETALING JAYA: The Catholic Ministry for the Deaf (CfMD) organised its first-ever rosary-making workshop for the Catholic Deaf Community at the Church of St Francis Xavier. The workshop saw an enthusiastic participation of 18 people, including a non-Catholic, and was supported by two interpreters.

CfMD coordinator Melina Sylvia Ann Melina shared, “This workshop aimed to help the Deaf community grow closer to Mother Mary. Many participants struggle to pray, but making their own rosary inspired them to start praying.”

The workshop facilitated by Denise Angus, 33, from the Church of the Sacred Heart, Cheras, was a mix of excitement, peace, and a sense of accomplishment.

“Teaching others to make the rosary deepens my own faith and brings me happiness. This workshop also showed me how patient they are in communicating with us,” said Denise who has been making rosaries since 2017

after her father's passing.

Denise's signature metal on the “Our Father” beads and her use of strong, long-lasting wires make her rosaries unique and has since sold over 100 rosaries this year alone, ranging from RM10 to RM120. “My mum does the quality control, ensuring each piece is perfect. It takes about 45 minutes to make one rosary, and I can make up to 20 in a day,” she explained.

The participants' experiences were heartfelt and moving. Teresa Chong Hui Chen, 33, shared, “It was hard to make, but I am very happy and thankful to CfMD for organising this.”

Angela Sia Hue Min, also 33, added, “I enjoyed making it and now feel inspired to make more for children. It was a beautiful moment.”

Caroline Sebastian, 55, found it difficult to hold the small beads but appreciated the variety of beautiful rosaries.

Iverson Peter, 49, used special gadgets to handle the small beads and felt a powerful con-

nection growing inside him. “I feel blessed to be part of this workshop,” he said.

Church of St Francis Xavier parish priest Fr Alvin Ng, SJ who came over after the workshop to bless the rosaries, emphasised the importance of respecting sacramentals: “After being blessed, rosaries cannot be discarded. They should be folded in paper and buried, meant to be passed down to future generations.” He added, “This workshop is a testament to the resilience and dedication of the Deaf community, who inspire us with their faith and commitment.”

The workshop was a resounding success giving participants the opportunity to learn different types of chaplets and rosaries to deepen their faith. The Catholic Deaf Community left with not just rosaries, but a renewed spirit and commitment to recite the rosary daily especially this October.

The response from the participants were interpreted by Melina from CfMD. **Elvina Fernandez**

Enlightening retreat on spiritual growth

IPOH: The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes held a parish retreat from October 7 to 9, led by Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap. The retreat focused on three central themes: *Divine Consciousness, Human Consciousness, and Fully Human, Fully Alive*.

On the first day, Fr Michael introduced the concept of the “3 S's” — Silence, Solitude, and Stillness, inviting participants to reflect on their spiritual journeys. He posed a pivotal question: “Are you working for God or doing the work of God?” He outlined the three stages of spiritual life — Purgative, Illuminating, and Unitive — and emphasised the importance of listening to Jesus, noting that true listening involves obedience.

Fr Michael highlighted the necessity of strengthening one's prayer life and conversing with God consistently, urging attendees to have their “Holy Moments” of God consciousness. He stressed the urgency of embracing the present, as God often speaks in the word “today.” Addressing spiritual blindness, he encouraged participants to overcome ignorance, cynicism, and hardness of heart.

The second day focused on Human Consciousness, where Fr Michael discussed the “Invasion of Grace” — the moments when God enters our lives. He prompted participants to examine their relationship with God through three key areas: Intimacy, Immersion, and Involvement. He warned against the “Culture of Appearance” and encouraged a deeper, more authentic engagement with faith.

Fr Michael introduced the “Four Cs of Life” — Cause, Consequence, Cure, and Cost — urging participants to confront the root causes of their problems rather than just the symptoms. He concluded the day by highlighting the importance of gradual conversion in thought and



Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap

behaviour, and the need for commitment despite restlessness and dissatisfaction.

On the final day, under the theme *Fully Human, Fully Alive*, Fr Michael emphasised the centrality of prayer, particularly the significance of silence in developing a deeper relationship with God. He outlined the four stages of prayer: Oratio (Oral Prayer), Lectio (Reading), Meditatio (Meditation), and Contemplatio (Contemplation).

Fr Michael also discussed the “Symphony of Sin,” categorising various sins and emphasising the transformative power of pain. He shared insights on temptation, illustrating the stages through the Biblical stories of Adam and Eve, as well as the three temptations of Jesus.

In concluding his reflections, he invoked the themes of mercy and empathy, citing the parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Lazarus. Fr Michael reminded participants that one cannot give what they do not possess and warned against self-righteousness that hinders the reception of God's grace.

The retreat provided an enriching experience for attendees, allowing them to reflect deeply on their spiritual lives and encouraging them to continue their journey towards a more profound relationship with God. **Patrick Louis**

Mental health workshop outreach at St Thomas parish

KUANTAN: A team from the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Mental Health Ministry (AMHM) conducted a workshop on the basics of mental health for the parishioners of the Church of St Thomas the Apostle recently. The event was attended by 60 enthusiastic participants from both the English and Chinese language groups.

The event began at 9.00am with remarks from AMHM's ecclesiastical assistant, Fr Philip Chua, who emphasised the importance of mental health awareness and its benefits for our communities, relationships, and daily lives. He also led the gathering in an opening prayer.

The workshop was divided into two parts, *Understanding Mental Health* and *Building Resilience in Mental Health*. The first segment focused on introducing participants to fundamental concepts of mental health, including its definition, comparisons with physical health, an overview of mental disorders, and the biopsychosocial-spiritual model for conceptualizing mental health. The knowledge gained in this initial session served as a crucial foundation for participants' understanding of mental health.



One of the participants asking a question during the session.

Equally important, the second topic concentrated on developing skills to enhance both mental and emotional resilience. Techniques for building mental resilience were grounded in cognitive behavioural therapy, a gold standard in psychotherapy, and included methods like reframing thoughts and cognitive restructuring. Additionally, skills for emotion regulation and self-care were introduced to help participants strengthen their emotional resilience.

By the end of the workshop, participants

were brimming with curiosity and enthusiasm to further explore mental health topics, including family relationships, early child care, traumas, and more. They were encouraged to attend AMHM's upcoming webinars and workshops to deepen their understanding of mental health and learn effective management strategies.

Participants were provided with resources from AMHM's services and encouraged to share them with those in need. The re-

sources include:

Counselling/Therapy Services:

AMHM offers face-to-face and online counselling and therapy services. Those seeking help are encouraged to sign up at SeekCounsel.ArchKL.org or contact us via WhatsApp at 017-3586188 or 017-9156188.

SHALOM Careline:

The Shalom Careline is available for everyone, offering anonymous conversations. Call us at 03-2723 7272, available daily from 10.00am – 1.00pm and 7.00pm – 11.00pm. Services are provided in English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil.

On behalf of the AMHM team, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Fr George Packiasamy, the parish priest of the Church of St Thomas, for graciously hosting us, as well as to the St Thomas parish community for providing this valuable mental health outreach opportunity. We hope and pray that all participants have been inspired to ignite their passion for mental health and become advocates for the cause.

Together, let us break the stigma and enrich our lives!

Rumah Ozanam joins Pure Life Society for fundraising bazaar

PETALING JAYA: Rumah Ozanam PJ was recently invited by the Pure Life Society to participate in their annual Women's Bazaar as a fundraising initiative for the home.

Comprising children from various underprivileged backgrounds and a Women's Wing, the Pure Life Society has been organising the Women's in Business Annual Bazaar for the past five years. The bazaar aims to empower women from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from local and B40 households, by promoting education and socioeconomic upliftment through community initiatives and advocacy. Women were given the opportunity to set up stalls, offering a range of unique and meaningful products, including food items, handmade crafts, and other handicrafts.

This year, the Women's Bazaar was unique as the Pure Life Society extended an invitation to Rumah Ozanam to participate by offering them a stall, with all sales proceeds going directly to the home. The event began at 9.00am and Rumah Ozanam sold a variety of items, including freshly fried French fries, curry puffs, coconut candy made by the children, and vegetarian sandwiches.

The children, especially the girls, managed the stall, taking charge of cooking and selling the food. Meanwhile, the boys assisted with heavier tasks such as lifting items, cleaning, and setting up the stall. The house mothers,

administrators, and board members of Rumah Ozanam also helped with sales. The children enjoyed fellowship at the bazaar, taking time to visit and enjoy the game stalls.

In previous years, the Pure Life Society exclusively invited women to participate in the bazaar. However, this year, they included Rumah Ozanam, recognising the home's financial need and understanding that fundraising initiatives like this bazaar would help with its upkeep and maintenance.

Rumah Ozanam PJ is a legally registered home for children, primarily caring for orphans, abused or abandoned children, and those from underprivileged or broken families. The home was established in 1998 with the primary goal of providing children with basic needs such as shelter, food, and education. The home focuses on helping the children catch up on missed schooling, which is essential for their future development.

The home largely operates on grants from the Welfare Ministry and donations from the public and well-wishers. However, in recent years, funding has significantly decreased due to economic challenges faced by donors. Rumah Ozanam is now appealing to the public for financial support. Those interested in contributing can contact 03-77819013 or email r_ozanam@yahoo.com for further details.

Gabriel Shanmugam

'BEC of elderly' still thriving after 44 years



Fr Gerard Theraviam celebrating Mass at BEC St Joseph.

KUALA LUMPUR: The St Joseph BEC of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist recently celebrated a remarkable milestone, marking its 44th anniversary with a heartfelt thanksgiving Mass.

Fifty-five devoted members from Medan Damansara and Bukit Damasara gathered for the Holy Eucharist at the Good Shepherd Villamaria Kindergarten and Nursery, coming together in a spirit of gratitude and unity.

Following the Mass, parish priest Fr Gerard Theraviam administered the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to the elderly, highlighting the community's commitment to caring for its most vulnerable members. "We are grateful for the anointing because we are a BEC of elderly," said coordinator Gabriel Saminathan, noting that many members are in their 70s and 80s.

Among the attendees, 85-year-old Arulsamy arrived in a wheelchair with the support of his caregiver, while 83-year-old Rita was assisted by Franciska. Their presence spoke volumes about the love and dedication within this community. The youngest participant, eight-year-old Matthew, proudly

served as altar boy, embodying the spirit of service that transcends generations.

A group of volunteers arrived early to prepare the venue, showcasing the collective effort and care that define St Joseph BEC. Gabriel shared, "St Joseph is one of the oldest BECs in the parish. We have known each other for a long time, growing old together. We constantly look out for one another, visiting, providing meals, and assisting with utility bills."

Fr. Gerard encouraged all BECs to reach out to homebound seniors, emphasising the importance of ensuring that no one feels forgotten in their later years.

The celebration concluded with a warm dinner fellowship, where members shared stories of their youth and exchanged health updates, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and faith within this vibrant community. Peter Raiappan served as the commentator, while Jeanne Fan took on the role of Lector, guiding the evening's reflections.

Together, they celebrated not just an anniversary but a journey of faith, love, and unwavering support for one another.



The Rumah Ozanam children, staff and board members at their booth.

Pope Francis hosts key Israeli-Palestinian peace advocates

VATICAN: Pope Francis held a significant meeting on October 17 with prominent figures tied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Nasser Al-Kidwa, former PLO representative, recently presented a peace plan focused on a two-state solution with the 1967 borders as a reference. Their proposal includes Jerusalem as a shared capital and a Temporary Arab Security Presence to manage Gaza. While neither figure holds an official role today, their Track II diplomacy aims to reopen channels for dialogue.

The Vatican meeting occurred amid escalating tensions, with the Israeli government claiming the possible killing of Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas leader in Gaza. Pope Francis's initiative stands as a call for political solutions in a region dominated by military actions. **AsiaNews**

man toll of violence.

Ehud Olmert, known for negotiating with the Palestinian Authority in 2009, and Nasser Al-Kidwa, a former PLO representative, recently presented a peace plan focused on a two-state solution with the 1967 borders as a reference. Their proposal includes Jerusalem as a shared capital and a Temporary Arab Security Presence to manage Gaza. While neither figure holds an official role today, their Track II diplomacy aims to reopen channels for dialogue.

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Pope Francis receives in audience Ehud Olmert, Nasser Al-Kidwa, Gershon Baskin, and Samer Sinjilawi (Vatican Media)

India's Eastern rite bishops dissociate from liturgy crisis

KERALA: The Synod of Bishops of the Eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church, the top decision-making body of the India-based Church, has distanced itself from the stalemate in the Church's largest archdiocese linked to a liturgy dispute.

The Church spokesperson, Fr Antony Vadakkekara, said the troubled Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese is "under the control of the Vatican and its apostolic administrator," and the Synod of Bishops cannot "take any decision" on its

administrative deadlock.

Although the Church is *sui iuris* (self-governing) under the Synod of Bishops, the bishops have no authority to decide on the archdiocese, which an Apostolic Administrator now governs, he said.

The archdiocese plunged into an administrative crisis on Oct 9 after most archdiocesan priests and lay people publicly rejected the authority of their Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Bosco Puthur, and his curia members.

The deadlock started after Puthur refused to ordain eight deacons until they submitted a written affidavit agreeing to celebrate only the Synod-approved Mass. Protestors say this new condition violates an earlier agreement.

The decades-old liturgy row was settled on July 1, with the archdiocesan priests agreeing to celebrate the Synod-approved Mass on certain occasions. The bishops also agreed to ordain archdiocesan deacons on Oct 1.

The protesters accuse the Synod of Bishops of using the apostolic administrator to impose the official Mass on the archdiocese, derailing the agreements.

They also accuse the bishops of "weaponising" the Sacrament of Orders to force the archdiocesan priest to follow the rubrics of the Synod-approved Mass.

Vadakkekara, a Vincentian priest, said the protesters are "creating confusion" with "false narratives against our bishops."

The core of the liturgical dispute is the rubrics of the Mass. The official Mass requires priests to turn to the altar during the Eucharistic prayer, but the archdiocesan priests and laity want priests to face the congregation throughout the Mass.

Vadakkekara said the synod is helpless in the current crisis. All the decisions,

including the one on deacons, are taken by the Apostolic Administrator "in consultation with the Vatican," he said.

The archdiocesan representatives refute Vadakkekara's version.

The apostolic administrator is "influenced by a group of bishops who could not digest the July agreement. They wanted to derail it," said Riju Kanjookaran, the spokesperson of the Archdiocesan Movement for Transparency (AMT).

The representative of AMT, a body of priests, religious, and laity spearheading the protest, said: "We want the administrator to ordain our deacons immediately" to end the current crisis.

According to church leaders, only seven of the 328 parishes in the archdiocese have followed the synod-approved rubrics since Oct 9.

"If I cannot celebrate the Mass that is followed in my archdiocese, what is the point of my ordination?" asked a deacon on condition of anonymity.

He said the ordinations of eight deacons have been postponed since last November because of the liturgy dispute. Another 16 deacons will be ready for ordination by this November.

"Where will we be accommodated?" he wondered. **ucanews.com**



Protesters from the troubled Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese seek the ordination of deacons in Church headquarters in Kerala on Oct 12. (Ucanews Photo)

St Egidio Community brings 51 Syrian refugees to Rome

ROME: Fifty-one refugees from Syria arrived at Rome's Fiumicino Airport from Beirut on October 15. The Community of St Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy, and the Waldensian Table worked with the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs to bring the group to Italy.

Some of the refugees were living in vulnerable housing in Beirut and Saida in southern Lebanon, while others were residing in camps in the Beqaa Valley, an area that has been directly affected by the ongoing conflict.

The group consists of families, including a number of single mothers with children, who will relocate and live in various regions in Italy.

Through the Humanitarian Corridors initiative, the families will receive aid in adjusting to life in the country with Italian language classes, and, once they receive refugee status, assistance in entering the workforce.

These 51 refugees are not the first to be welcomed to Italy. Since 2016, the efforts of the Community of St Egidio and its partners have helped bring about 3,000 people to safer conditions in Italy from Lebanon alone.

In total, more than 7,700 refugees have come to Europe through the Humanitarian Corridors.

Throughout the 11 years of his pontificate, the refugee crisis has continued to be an important issue for Pope Francis. He has not only spoken about it, calling countries out for their indifference, but his pontificate has been marked with action to support them as well.

In 2016, finishing his visit to the Greek island of Lesbos, Pope Francis brought 12 refugees from Syria, including six children, back to Rome aboard the papal plane.

Five years later, when he travelled to Greece, he met with nine young Syrian Christians in the Apostolic Nunciature in Athens. **Kielce Gussie, Vatican News**



Pope Francis meeting with refugees on the island of Lesbos.

Bishops worldwide should implement 'diocesan synods' in home countries



The head of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), Cardinal Charles Bo of the Archdiocese of Yangon, Myanmar, said diocesan synods are an effective means to "build a vision and mission" for local Churches.

The high-ranking prelate from Myanmar told journalists October 17 that synodality on a diocesan level is not a new concept for the Catholic Church.

"When I was made a bishop in 1990, one thing that attracted me in canon law is that about the diocesan synod," Bo stated at a Vatican press briefing.

"All these years as a bishop — I have been in seven dioceses — I have conducted diocesan synods four times: in '92, '96, 2004, and 2014."

Speaking from more than two decades of experience with diocesan synods, the 75-year-old cardinal said collecting feedback "from the farmers, from the villages, from parishes, and from workers, religious, and prisoners" has proven to be a worthwhile process.

According to Bo, the reports generated from synodal consultations with Catholic faithful in dioceses have provided solid foundations for the growth of local Churches in his home country of Myanmar.

The Bishops' Conference of Myanmar is one of 22 active members of the FABC led by Bo. Earlier this year, the FABC held its synodality workshop — which was attended by 38 delegates from local Churches spread across 17 countries — in Bangkok, Thailand, from Aug 5–8.

During the regional meeting, the need for unity and harmony were identified as key for the growth of the Catholic Church in a largely non-Christian region.

In spite of the challenges the Church faces in Asia, including the region's geographical vastness and "deep-rooted cultures and traditions" that are resistant to change or view Christianity as foreign, Bo believes this month's global synodal talks will be a "valuable opportunity" to bring "renewal" in local parishes.

The FABC aims to play a critical role in

"guiding the Church in Asia toward a synodal mission" by placing greater attention on the participation of women, youth engagement, the poor and marginalised, and migrants at the parish level.

"It [FABC] serves as a platform for collaboration among local Churches and promotes shared pastoral priorities," Bo said.

"The [synodal] process has brought renewed energy and hope for the future, and the Church in Asia is committed to building a Church that includes everyone and listens to everyone," he added.

With the final global session of the Synod on Synodality coming to a close on Oct 27, Bo hopes the 272 bishops participating in this year's discussions will open diocesan synods in their own dioceses.

"I wish also to encourage all bishops and all the dioceses that — based on the fruits that we gather in this Synod on Synodality — we don't start and stop with this meeting [in the Vatican] but is a continuous effort that we try in all Churches," said Bo. **Kristina Millare, CNA**

Synod participants debate level of bishops' 'doctrinal competence'

As the Pope's Synod of Bishops on Synodality breaches the halfway point, participants are now debating the "doctrinal competency" of national bishops' conferences, loosely meaning their ability to adapt matters of doctrine to their local context.

Speaking to journalists during an October 16 press briefing on the synod, Italian layman Paolo Ruffini, prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Communications, said current discussion topics include the relationship between local churches, the need for communion in and among bishops' conferences, and the possibility of "returning doctrinal competency" to episcopal conferences.

He said discussion is also touching on the general role of episcopal conferences at all levels, and the need to preserve the unity of the church amid differences.

Speaking at the press briefing were several canonical and theological expert consultants at the synod, who are tasked with identifying and summarising areas of consensus, among other things.

Among them was Italian Fr Dario Vitali, a priest of the Diocese of Velletri-Segni and coordinator of the theological experts for the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. He holds a doctorate in ecclesiology and is a professor of ecclesiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Asked to expand on the specific issue of the doctrinal competence of bishops' conferences and what that might look like concretely, Vitali said that earlier that morning, "this issue got a lot of attention in the synod hall."

"On all sides what was expressed was either the desire for progress in this regard, or fear of going in this direction," he said.

Doctrinal competency for episcopal conferences has long been a point of debate in

Catholic theological circles, with advocates arguing that such contextualisation is necessary in order for local Catholics to understand and live the Church's doctrines, while opponents have argued that giving them too much room for interpretation could lead to deviations and misinterpretations.

In May 1998 Pope John Paul II published two documents — his *motu proprio Apostolos Suos* and an accompanying apostolic letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem* — which essentially took all teaching authority away from episcopal conferences, including doctrinal competency.

Though published by John Paul II, those letters were largely the work of then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, at the time prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and were a bid to cement the unity of the Church's body of magisterial teaching.

In his remarks, Vitali noted that while *Apostolos Suos* "basically took all competencies away from episcopal conferences, leaving them as a pastoral entity," paragraph 21 of the document maintains a certain level of "doctrinal competence."

Paragraph 21 of the text states that, "The joint exercise of the episcopal ministry also involves the teaching office."

"Although they do not enjoy infallible teaching authority, the Bishops in communion with the head and members of the college...are authentic teachers and instructors of the faith for the faithful entrusted to their care," it says.

It notes that the Code of Canon Law itself recognises "some areas of doctrinal competence of the Conferences of Bishops," such as the issuance of catechisms for the local church, and the approval of translations and editions of sacred texts, including Scripture, with approval from Rome.

Vitali said this passage "does not mean



Participants in the Synod of Bishops on Synodality engage in discussion at the Vatican on October 16, 2024. (Vatican Media)

[the bishops' conference] has the ability to develop dogmas, no, but it means that concretely, in the context in which an ecclesial conference finds itself, it can significantly adapt, as was established in the Second Vatican Council, the language to that context and offer responses to the problems that arise from that context."

He noted that the doctrinal competency of episcopal conferences was also included in Pope Francis's 2022 apostolic constitution *Predicatae Evangelium* when it spoke of "a healthy decentralisation."

This decentralisation, Vitali said, implies that "some competencies must be returned to the episcopal conferences on aspects that they know well."

"So, this is a particularly important provision, but there is the obligation, and I feel it is important to remind you of this as a theologian, that bishops have competence for everything that is related to doctrine," he said.

Vitali said the structure of the Church is pyramidal and as such, "a lot of matters are reserved to the Pope, this is in order to preserve unity, but each bishop in his church can address all matters and he has the duty, not only the ability, to deal with all matters

for the benefit of his faithful."

"Bishops conferences or any organism at the level of church groupings," can address any matter that requires attention, he said, saying, "it's clear that at this point there is also the possibility of formulating and sharing a proposal in a doctrinal key that then has fallout of a pastoral character in the accompaniment of people on a journey."

While the synod experts will make concrete proposals on some specific points, such as changes in Canon Law for the provision of pastoral councils in parishes and other similar structures, that are expected to be included in the synod's final concluding document, and it is presumed these proposals will also touch on the matter of doctrinal competency for bishops' conferences.

Should Pope Francis move to return broader doctrinal competency to local episcopal conferences, it would likely be seen by critics as the reversal of another aspect of Benedict XVI's legacy.

However, if there is a lack of a clear consensus on the matter, it is unclear what proposals regarding doctrinal competency will be made and whether the Pope would take any action, or request further study. **Elise Ann Allen, CNA**

Healing the divide

Let me share a true story about Charlie (obviously not his real name). Charlie is living with dementia. Besides having dementia, he also has his wife, children, and grandchildren. Perhaps Charlie can no longer fulfil all the roles in the way that he once did but the status of spouse and fatherhood cannot be taken away from him just because of his status of having dementia. It is because of this that his family continues to involve him in their lives. His children talk to him as a father, not as a stranger. Even at times when he may experience some disorientation, that doesn't erase his position as a father.



Dancing with Dementia

DR CECILIA CHAN

about them as if they weren't there, and treat them as if they are a member of the living dead, we are showing them that they no longer have a valid social identity in our eyes.

When Charlie eventually had to be transitioned into a care facility, his wife, who knew him so intimately, wrote Charlie's life story for the staff of the facility. She knew what was important for the staff to know. She knew of his Japanese wartime fears

when he would often stay dressed at night ready with his packed bag, standing by if he had to make a quick dash in case of any bombing. Some nights he would stay dressed throughout the night. Charlie's wife was able to let the staff know this was part of his life story. When the staff are equipped with this knowledge they realise, 'This is why Charlie needs to stay dressed at night and needs his packed bag.' If they were not aware of this history, the staff might have prescribed unnecessary tranquilizers to calm him down. Instead, they could see the world from his perspective and support him. This makes a whole world of difference to Charlie's quality of life and also provides the staff with a deep sense of satisfaction.

The staff also learned to meet Charlie in continually new ways. Sometimes it may include entering into his memory rooms as he repeated for the umpteenth time his memory during the Japanese occupation



as if it were now and they were his ally. And then there were the tranquil moments in which they held hands and were silent watching the sunset and sharing presence.

This true story about dementia portrays a different reality than the usual tragedy-ridden narratives.

Dementia is an appeal to our humanity. Dementia is not our tragedy. The real tragedy is our legacy: how our societies have come to view humanness as an individualised substance, to which differential statuses can be attributed. We must understand that the independent, healthy, and wealthy are not 'the norm', there is no 'norm'.

Life is full of circumstances that we may or may not see coming. We are social beings, so we should be able to live in a society that will uphold us regardless of our circumstances. Maybe we can challenge the old misunderstandings, and treat affected people still as full people, with minds of their own, who are entitled to the total respect of others. In that case, people with dementia will have the opportunity to live full and satisfying lives.

More importantly, they can still share their lives with us.

Recently, I attended a Zoom meeting discussing the recent controversial advertisement called The Long Goodbye (<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/dementia-news-and-media/long-goodbye>). Do watch it to understand why it is so controversial. I want to share what Maxine Linnell (who is living with Dementia, from the UK) expressed.

"Maybe you can listen to what we communicate, to what we feel, to our humanity, to our personhood. Maybe you can respect and empathise with us, rather than dismiss and patronise us. Maybe you could learn something from us. Maybe we could get closer to each other, not divided and distant."

Let me end by quoting Mother Theresa - *Human rights are not a privilege conferred by the government. They are every human being's entitlement under his humanity.*

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

Erratum: 'Collegiality of Bishops and Catechesis' (HERALD, October 20, 2024). We regret that an incorrect illustration was mistakenly published with the mentioned article. Below is the correct illustration. We apologise for the error and any confusion caused.

COLLEGIALITY OF BISHOPS AND CATECHESIS

After the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the understanding that all bishops, under the leadership of the pope, are responsible for catechesis for the whole Church emerged. This is related to one of the distinctive features of the Council, namely, that of the **collegiality of bishops**.



'Collegiality' refers to "the doctrine that all bishops, with the pope, as head of the college, have a **corporate responsibility** for the unity of the faith and of communion in the universal Church" (The New Dictionary of Theology).



An excellent example of collegiality in catechesis can be seen in the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. At the **Extraordinary Synod of Bishops** held in 1985 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, some bishops proposed that a universal catechism be produced.



The time is ripe to begin work on a new catechism!

On the recommendations of the Synod, in 1986, St. John Paul II appointed a commission, consisting twelve cardinals and bishops under the leadership of **Cardinal Josef Ratzinger** (later Pope Benedict XVI). The catechism was aimed, above all, at the bishops since they have the greatest responsibility for catechesis in the diocese

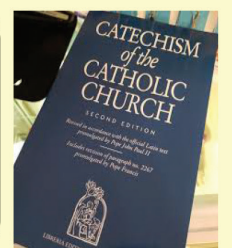


An editorial committee, headed by **Bishop Christoph Schonborn** (now Cardinal), made up of seven bishops was set up. In addition, the first three parts of the Catechism were assigned to three pairs of bishops from different parts of the world.



The revised draft was sent (*sub secreto*) in 1989 to bishops all over the world for their comments. More than a thousand bishops made their opinions known (with about twenty-four thousand observations).

On June 25, 1992, St. John Paul II gave formal approval to the final text. In his Apostolic Constitution, **Fidei Depositum**, the pope wrote:



"This achievement of the Catechism thus reflects the **collegial nature of the Episcopate**, it testifies to the Church's catholicity."

Faith, healing and restoration

Bob Ho

Even devoted individuals, battling serious health challenges such as cancer and heart conditions, set aside their personal struggles to embark on a mission of faith and healing. Together, they lovingly restored over 100 sacred sculptures to their former glory, finding peace and solace in the process.

Responding to God's call, they joined the restoration team formed by Fr Robert Daniel, parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLOL) in Ipoh. Their journey began during the pandemic in 2020, and their proximity to the Kinta district allowed them to offer their time and talents for this labour of love. Fr Robert supported their dedication by providing letters confirming their essential work for the church during the MCO.

Undeterred by the challenges of the pandemic, the team worked tirelessly for three years. They scaled scaffolding and

carried life-size statues to their workshop, carefully cleaning, repairing, and painting these sacred works of art. Some of the statues, over a century old and originating from France, Italy, and India, required intricate attention. Using not only brushes but their very hands, they infused life into each piece, creating a divine blend of artistry and devotion.

Fr Robert was very supportive of the team throughout their journey. "He is our light as we worked in the darkness of a church emptied by COVID-19," shared team leader Pauline Eu Poh Lin. She believes the team embraced the joyful vision Fr Robert set for the restoration, as he chose a vibrant and uplifting theme, steering away from the traditional Gothic, Baroque, or Rococo styles.

"Many of us faced serious health challenges when we began in 2020, but, miraculously, those problems have since disappeared," Pauline revealed. Diagnosed with severe pre-cancerous liver cirrhosis in

2019, she was told she had only two years to live. Yet, in her words, "with God's grace, I am here today." Her story is a testament to the healing power of faith, dedication, and the strength that comes from working for a higher purpose.

Pauline believes wholeheartedly that it was the Holy Spirit moving through each volunteer. "We never imagined that as we restored more than 100 statues, we would also experience a kind of restoration in our own health." She attributes this to being immersed in spirituality every day for three years, constantly in prayer, and seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. "We spoke to the Holy Spirit and felt His guidance with us every step of the way." The team gathered in prayer each morning, asking for protection and wisdom before starting their work. Incredibly, not a single accident occurred during the entire project. "We also grew as individuals, especially in our spiritual journeys," added Pauline, a retired midwife from Hospital Fatimah, Ipoh.

A former student of the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, Pauline holds the school motto, "Steadfast in Duty," close to her heart. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to use her God-given gift of art to serve others, all for the greater glory of our loving Father. "I am also so proud of Our Lady's love and guidance," she said, beaming with gratitude for the blessings and growth that came from this sacred mission.

Cancer survivor Mary Moh described the restoration project as "very challenging, but with the Lord's help, we pulled through, and all of us came out renewed and recharged." Moh, who also serves in the choir and flower arrangement team at the Church of St Michael (SMC), emphasised the personal significance of this mission: "Each of us faced our own health struggles. When we began, we had no idea what lay ahead, but now we know — there is always light at the end of the tunnel. We just need to trust God."

For catechist Linda Christina, who also served as a lector and commentator, the project became a form of art therapy. Meanwhile, Athanasius Alexander, a volunteer at the church's Heritage Gallery, expressed his deep gratitude to Fr Robert for entrusting him with "this beautiful project." He reflected, "We learned so much from painting — especially the value of patience in life."

Athanasius found the intricate detailing, particularly on the statue of Christ the King, to be the most challenging. Alexander Anthony Dars, curator of the Heritage Gallery, shared that this statue was donated by Dr Abdon Clement Kathigasu @ Arumugam Canatapai Pillay M.B.E., who, together with his wife Sybil Medan Kathigasu G.M., courageously supported the resistance against the Japanese during World War II. Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, has even opened the cause for Sybil's beatification. The couple regularly attended Mass at SMC and occasionally at OLOL.

Not even heart stents could stop volunteers like Felix Ambrose, who serves as an animator, sacristan Matthews Selwarajal, and Velanganny Anthonysamy from moving the heavy statues from the church to the upper-floor workshop at the Bernadette Centre. Steven Hew, despite having a heart condition, also played a key role. Together, they rejoiced in the successful completion of the mission.

Assistant parish priest Fr George Vaithynathan shared that the restoration



Athanasius working intricately on the statue of Christ the King.

effort began when the team noticed a leaking roof, which led to the discovery of faded and damaged statues — including those with missing eyes, ears, and hands. Many of these statues had been stored away for years. The restoration extended to the Stations of the Cross sculptures, and the results delighted parishioners. "We received positive responses. Our congregation and the hundreds of pilgrims who come here from across the country were moved by what they saw," Fr George said.

During the renovation, a box of raffle ticket stubs bearing the names of church donors was discovered buried beneath the main altar. Older parishioners recalled the many fundraising activities that took place when the current church was built in 1959, replacing the original wooden structure from 1905. Fr George explained that the stubs carried the promise that "Mass will be offered in perpetuity for the donors." The box was reburied alongside the latest raffle ticket stubs beneath the altar, marked by a marble plaque indicating the location.

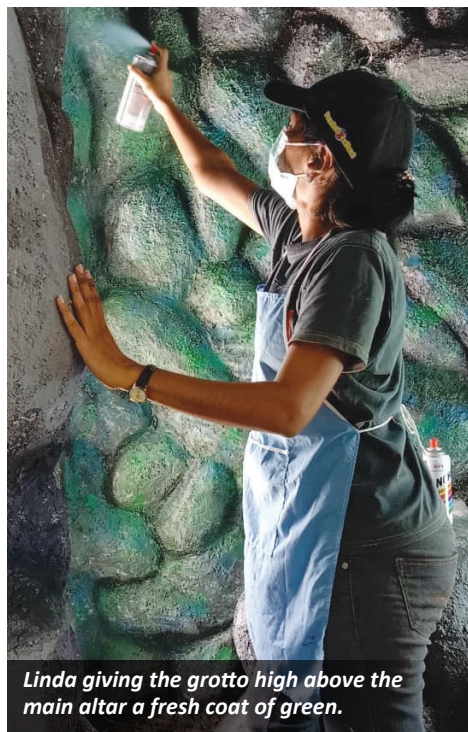
At the entrance of OLOL, a large marble slab now greets visitors with the words, "House of God. Gate of Heaven," replacing the smaller tiles that once adorned the floor. The slab also bears the word *ekklesia* in Greek, meaning "Church." Fr George proudly noted that OLOL's beamless structure allows for an unobstructed view from any pew, a testament to "the wisdom of our forefathers."

OLOL remains a rich fountain of spiritual growth, with 22 parishioners, including Fr George, having become priests, and around 20 others joining various religious orders. Fr Robert and Fr George continue to serve four chapels: St Sebastian (Ipoh), St Francis of Assisi (Tasik), Annai Vallanganny (Jelapang), and Christ the King (Buntong).

Though volunteers Velanganny, Felix, Matthews, Kelvin Roy, Roy Rogers, and Maria could not attend the interview, their dedication was evident throughout the project. Other parishioners also lent their support whenever needed, with one providing a free flow of food every workday. The restoration project truly brought out the best in this Christ-centred community, who came together during the pandemic to glorify God through their labour of love.



Velangkanny (left) and Alexandar up on the scaffolding.



Linda giving the grotto high above the main altar a fresh coat of green.



The team with the restored sculptures of Jesus, St John The Evangelist and St Mary Magdalene. From left: Steven, Mary, Pauline, Linda and Athanasius.

It's hard being a good Samaritan

The meaning of the parable of the good Samaritan at the end of the day is simple – Love your neighbour as yourself... but gosh it's hard to do.

We all know this story, don't we? How an expert in the law asked Jesus "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" and later the same expert responded to God's question "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" by saying "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself." Luke 10:25-27

Jesus then illustrates 'who is my neighbour', with a well-known parable that is also a well-used idiom, "Good Samaritan" meaning: Someone who tries to help people in trouble or need; A compassionate person who helps others unselfishly; A person who helps others without any thoughts of a reward or compensation (source: *theidioms.com*).

Recently, one of our lessons for the Year 1 students in my catechism class was about the parable of the Good Samaritan and we asked the children who their neighbour was and how they could use their helping, healing hands, to help others.

As I prepared for the class, I realised how much easier it was to show kindness and be helpful to those I know versus being kind to someone I didn't quite like or someone I didn't know. It's also so easy to turn a blind eye and walk away from someone in need when it requires us to delay our agenda; the things we need to do, the places we need to be. We always come up with excuses such as we don't have the time, we are too busy or we don't have extra cash or small change.

But how can we change this thinking?

How can we clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience? (Colossians 3:12) How can we show simple acts of kindness to our neighbour?

Priest, Levite, or Samaritan – who are we?

Our days on earth are numbered, Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Knowing that we have a finite number of days to spend should spur us not into a life of debauchery, self-pleasure, and sin, but rather to seek the kingdom of God, to pursue wisdom, goodness, kindness, justice and more.

Yet, this call to seek God and His Kingdom isn't an easy one, in fact it goes against today's world that encourages us to consume more, buy more, become more. If we examine ourselves, what would we see? Would our values and actions align with that of God?

Also, how many times have we helped others only because we know they can repay us back – 'I scratch your back, next time you scratch mine ah?' Or help those whom you want to make a good impression, who will remember your good works and reward you. And how do we treat our helpers at home or the foreigners that help to build our country? How do we speak to them, what do we say about them?

How many times have we been like the priest and the Levite and how many times have we acted like the Samaritan? For me I realised I am more like the priest and



Mustard Seed Journeys

JOANNE WONG

Levite but am hopeful that I can be better.

It is indeed so difficult to be a good Samaritan in our daily lives, to pursue the good that bring us closer to God's Kingdom.

Here's three ways that we can become more Samaritan:

1. Pay it forward

The idea is simple – when someone does a good deed for you, instead of repaying them directly, you can perform a good deed for someone else.

Kindness is one of the most powerful forces on earth, and using kindness to serve other people can be transformative. Think of all the everyday people that are out there fighting for change to help the refugees and migrant workers, stray animals, flood victims, deforestation, etc.

I think about these people and wonder how selfless they are to put aside the ways of the world to fight for a cause. It overwhelms me sometimes wondering how I can be like them. But really, we can start with just one small step – be inspired to donate some time or money to help worthy causes, and as shared, just pay it forward by doing small acts of kindness without expecting anything in return.

God has gifted each of us with abilities and talents that can be used to serve others, thus we can use these gifts to show kindness to those in need and help to serve people in our lives and in our community.

2. Open our eyes and hearts

We may not stumble upon someone who

is beaten up but there are others out there who are hurting who need our help. Let's open our eyes to these people by really seeing with our hearts and not our eyes. Who needs our time? What can we do to help?

Let's set aside our hesitations, fears, and the countless reasons not to act, and take a moment to help – offering whatever we can.

We need to look beyond ourselves by serving others and helping to create change and impact someone else's life even if it is in a small way. As St Mother Teresa said, "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love."

Ask God for guidance in our words and actions, and trust Him to lead our steps as we step out of our comfort zones to extend kindness to others.

3. Pray to be more Samaritan

Most often we don't think we are the problem. It's someone else that is the problem not us. We aren't very good at recognising our own biases and flaws.

So let us pray and ask God to help us become more like the good Samaritan. Let us ask God to touch our lives and change our hearts so that we will seek His Kingdom more. May He make us more generous and compassionate; may He open our eyes to see opportunities to make a difference, and may He change our hearts so that we become people after God's own heart.

Joanne Wong is on a journey towards having faith the size of a mustard seed. She welcomes thoughts and suggestions on how to have a closer walk with God. Email her at joanne.wpm@gmail.com

A different kind of journey

Sixty-seven years ago, I left my home, my family, my friends and everything familiar to me to enter the novitiate of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. Once there, I met other young women who would become lifelong friends and companions on this remarkable journey.

Seventy years after that day (May 10, 2024), I left my home, the city that I love, lifelong friends and everything familiar to me again, in order to move to the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. Once again, I joined some of the friends of a lifetime. But this time, it was more to remember than to plan or work.

This time, I shared a different kind of journey. No longer teens in our salad days, but wizened veterans of having walked the path, sometimes marching for a cause but always working with our community promise in our minds and hearts: to provide more abundant life, especially to those who are poor.

During these days of being elderly, there is sometimes sadness as we hang up the energy that fuelled us for so many years, as we worked shoulder to shoulder to help gentle the life of this world.

And now, we still walk shoulder to shoulder. Some with canes or walkers or a limp. In our infirmity and with tired bones but hearts full, we share treasured memories. There are no regrets, but sometimes there are moments of sadness – keeping vigil with a friend as she fades away from us, missing pals who have already gone before us, maybe wishing

for more vigour and energy to continue working on issues we still care so much about. We use moments together to remember, to rejoice, to be grateful for what has been and to be ready for what will be.

We pledge to each other to go out with a bang, to leave no question unanswered for as long as we are able. And we do it together, even though we may wobble a little. This is our home once again. We cannot escape the reality of advanced age. We are here together to share a different kind of journey.

There is a certain sadness being here – as we all know this is the beginning of the journey's end. But there is no giving up as long as there is any spark of energy for the mission. The mission we have shared for more than 70 years together. We still do what we can. And we try, as we might, to make life gentle for each other, as we

protect our memories that no one can take away. It has been a great ride and I don't think there is one of us who would trade it or change it.

These days of being old are far from rosy, although some of them are. It might be as simple as floating down one of the long hallways looking for a room to sit and chat. Even today, I stopped to chat, and what I got was: "We are all close to the end. We may as well just sit back, laugh and enjoy the ride."

On another day, I am lonesome. So I stop in another room for a visit. "Tell me something new," I say. Or: "Do you have a good book for me to read?"

Or maybe: "Is there any good news to hear?" Or: "Is there anything you need?"

I stopped at my old apartment for one last time, mainly to label



"We pledge to each other to go out with a bang, to leave no question unanswered for as long as we are able," writes Sr. Margaret Cessna.

*"And we do it together, even though we may wobble a little."
(Unsplash/K Mitch Hodge)*

items for destination or donation. Final packing will be done by others soon. And then professional movers will finish the job.

I stood on the balcony and gazed out over Lake Erie, which had been my front yard for 20 years. I thanked the universe for the gift of the soothing laps of water that so often calmed me down and for the gorgeous clouds that appeared on a regular basis.

As I left the city and hit the road for the trip back to my new home, there was a heaviness in me as I realised what is gone: work, home, friends, independence. I don't know how I will fill these empty spaces.

One of the layers of this transition is a force that causes this emotional heaviness as I move on and leave what was once life-giving to me behind.

For me, more time is needed to deal with the emotion. It will happen eventually, I know.

But today is not the day. **Margaret Cessna, GSR**

Margaret Cessna is a member of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. After teaching social studies and theology in high school for 27 years, she founded and for 10 years served as executive director of Heartbeats, a network of women who developed world and minority artists. For the past 12 years, she has been a family mentor for Catholic Charities' office of Migration and Refugee Services. As a freelance writer, she has published in journals, newspapers and magazine, and has written two books.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Mature love or just going through the motions?

As a Lutheran priest, Dietrich Bonhoeffer would frequently offer this advice to a couple when he presided at their wedding: *Today you are in love and believe your love will sustain your marriage, but it can't. Let your marriage sustain your love.*

Wise words, but what exactly do they mean? Why can't love sustain a marriage?

What Bonhoeffer is highlighting is that it is naïve to think that feelings will sustain us in love and commitment over the long haul. They can't, and they wouldn't. But ritual can. How? By creating a ritual container that can keep us steady inside the roller coaster of emotions and feelings that will beset us in any long-term relationship.

Simply put, we will never sustain a long-term relationship with another person, with God, with prayer, or in selfless service on the basis of good feelings and positive emotions. This side of eternity, our feelings and emotions mostly come and go according to their own dictates and are not given to consistency.

We know the inconsistency of our emotions. One day we feel affectionate toward someone and the next day we feel irritated. The same is true for prayer. One day we feel warm and focused and the next day we feel bored and distracted.

And so, Bonhoeffer suggests we need to sustain ourselves in love and prayer by ritual, that is, by habitual practices that keep us steady and committed within the flux of feelings and emotions.

For example, take a couple in a marriage. They fall in love and commit themselves to love each other and stay with each other for the rest of their lives, and at root they fully intend that. They respect each other, are good to each other, and would die for each other. However, that's not always true of their emotions. Some days their emotions seemingly belie their love. They are irritated and angry with each other. Yet, their actions toward each other continue to express love and commitment and not their negative feelings. They ritually kiss each other as they leave the house in the morning with the words, "I love you!" Are those words a lie? Are they simply going through the motions? Or is this real love?

The same holds true for love and commitment inside a family. Imagine a mother and a father with two teenage children, a boy of sixteen and a girl of fourteen. As a family they have a rule that they will sit together at dinner for forty minutes every evening, without their cellphones or other such devices. Many evenings when the son or daughter or one of the parents comes to the ta-

ble (without their cellphone) out of dram duty, bored, dreading the time together, wanting to be somewhere else. But they come because they have made that commitment. Are they simply going through the motions or showing real love?

If Bonhoeffer is right, and I submit he is, they are not just going through the motions, they are expressing mature love. It's easy to express love and be committed when our feelings are taking us there and holding us there. But those good feelings will not sustain our love and commitment in the long-term. Only fidelity to a commitment and ritual actions that undergird that commitment will keep us from walking away when the good feelings go away.

In our culture today, at most every level, this is not understood. From the person caught up in a culture addicted to feelings, to a good number of therapists, ministers of religion, prayer leaders, spiritual directors, and friends of Job, we hear the line: *If you aren't feeling it, it's not real; you're just going through the motions! That's empty ritual!*

Indeed, it can be an empty ritual. As scripture says, *we can honour with our lips even as our hearts are far away.* However, more often than not it is a mature expression of love because it is now a love that is no longer fuelled by

self-interest and good feelings. It's now a love that's wise and mature enough to account for the human condition in all its inadequacy and complexity and how these colour and complicate everything – including the one we love, our own selves, and the reality of human love itself. The book we need on love will not be written by passionate lovers on their honeymoon, just as the book we need on prayer will not be written by a religious neophyte caught up in the first fervour of prayer (nor by most enthusiastic leaders of prayer). The book we need on love will be written by a married couple who, through ritual, have sustained a commitment through the ups and downs of many years. Just as the book we need on prayer will be written by someone who has sustained a life of prayer and church going through seasons and Sundays when sometimes the last thing he or she wanted to do was to pray or go to church.

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

At times, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* can read like a plumber's manual. While such an approach might be needed in some areas, such as within the intricacies of the various parts of the creed, it's not as required in the realm of the spiritual life. And so, while the fourth part of the *Catechism* has an important internal structure, it certainly breaks from any resemblance of a manualistic approach to prayer.

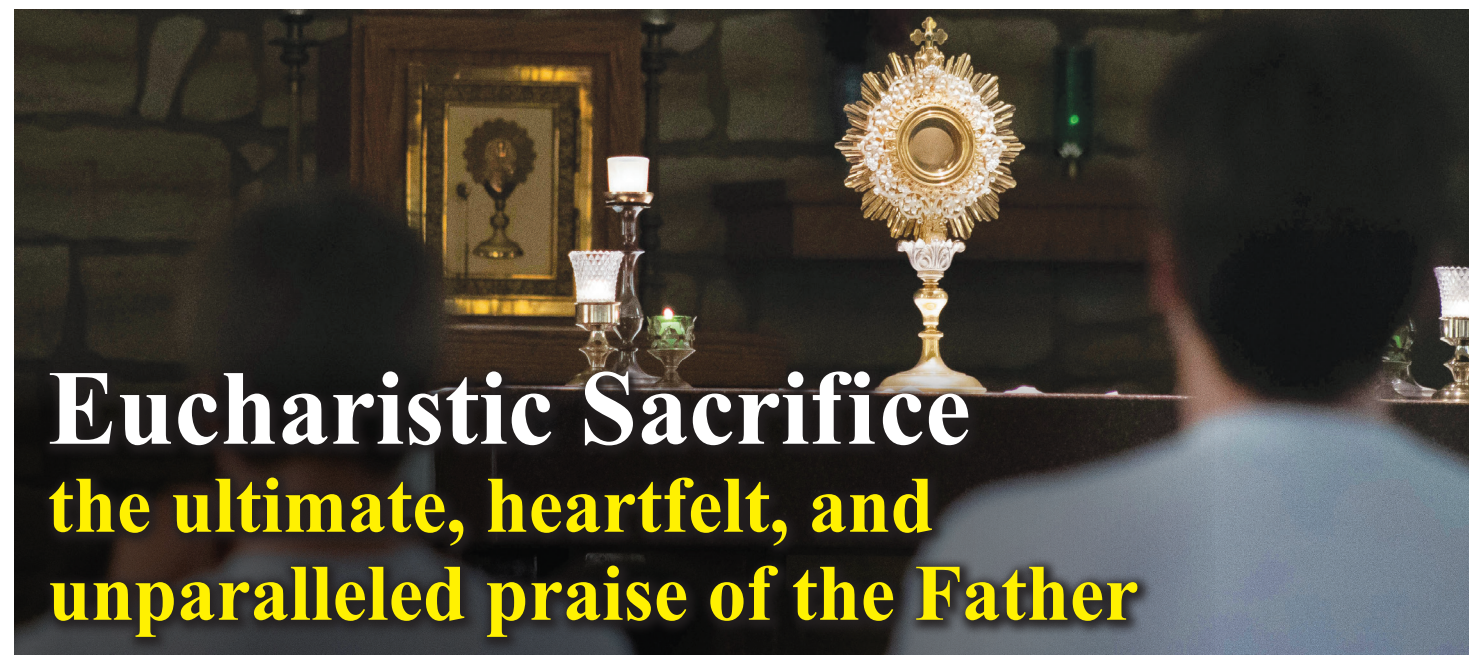
The first chapter of the first section concludes its third and final article by directing the minds and hearts of believers to the sacred liturgy. After covering the different forms of prayer – from blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise – the Church's universal teachings on the spiritual life point us to the fount and source of it all.

The Church culminates her teachings on prayer by deferring and shifting everything to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Adhering to the Lord Jesus' command, "Do this in remembrance of me," the Church offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice daily and sees all forms of prayer as fulfilled and flowing from it.

The *Catechism* teaches: "The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer."

As the Holy Spirit makes present the one historical sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, offered over two thousand years ago at Calvary, within the mystery and mysticism of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, so the Holy Spirit manifests, celebrates, and brings to completion all the forms of prayer that are found within the human heart.

The Eucharist is the blessing and adoration of God by the Lord Jesus. It is the height of petition and intercession as the Lord offers himself to the Father for our salvation. The Eucharist is the Lord Jesus'



Eucharistic Sacrifice the ultimate, heartfelt, and unparalleled praise of the Father

thanksgiving to the Father for giving him the call to redeem and bring humanity back to him. On this point, the word "eucharist" literally means "thanksgiving." And the Eucharist is the praise of God the Son to God the Father by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the ultimate, heartfelt, and unparalleled praise offered to the Father. It is the untouched — but very approachable — perfect praise of God.

In the Eucharistic Sacrifice, all forms of prayer find their fulfilment and fruition. The Eucharist is the heart of prayer. Prayer cannot reach its peak without the Eucharist. Without question, the Eucharist is the summit and source of our prayer and spiritual lives.

The Eucharist is not simply the height of our own personal prayer. It is the culmination and completion of all the

prayers of the entire body of believers. The Eucharist finalises my prayer as a believer, but also our prayer as a Church.

The *Catechism* explains: "[The Eucharist] is 'the pure offering' of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name and, according to the traditions of East and West, it is the 'sacrifice of praise.'"

The Eucharistic Sacrifice teaches us that we never pray alone. No believer ever offers up prayer by themselves. We are always within the body. We are always united with one another. The Eucharist is the perfect expression of this unity and reminds us of our bond to one another in Jesus Christ.

Even when the Church's hermits and cloistered Religious pray, they pray within the body and for the body of believers. They are more united to us than we can realise in this life.

As Christians, we relish and rally within this bond of peace with one another in the Lord Jesus. The Lord brings us together, as Saint Paul teaches us: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," and "one body, one Spirit." We come before God in prayer as a people and never as individuals alone by ourselves.

As one body, with one voice — expressed in countless different ways — we offer up our praise to God most perfectly and preeminently in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It's where our prayer always turns and where our prayer is always nourished.

With this emphasis on the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the first section of part four of the *Catechism* concludes its first chapter on prayer. It then moves to its second chapter, which is marked by an exploration into the tradition of prayer. **Fr Jeffrey F. Kirby, Crux**

Little Catholics' Corner



Jesus
heals blind
Bartimaeus
Colour the
picture

Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well (Mark 10: 52)"

Dear children,

In today's Gospel reading, a blind man called Bartimaeus called out to Jesus to cure him.

Sometimes we can be blind too. We don't see the truth about God, or when we can't see our own faults then we have a kind of blindness.

When we find that we can't see ourselves clearly, we should be like Bartimaeus and call out to Jesus to help us.

If we believe in Him then we will get our sight back too.

When Bartimaeus was cured of his blindness he started to follow Jesus right away.

When we can see ourselves and God clearly then we will also want to follow Jesus.

Children, tonight before you go to bed, ask God to help you remember your sins and then tell Him you're sorry for them!

Love
Aunty Eliz

Psalm 126 Word Puzzle

Fill in the missing letters. Then use the letters to fill in the blanks at the very end. The number at the end of each line tells you where the letter goes.

When the ___ord brought back (8) the captives of

Z ___on, (7) we were like men ___ reaming. (11)

Then our mouth was ___illed with laughter, (6)

and our t___ngue with rejoicing. (17) They they said

among the n___tions, (3) "The Lord ___as done (15)

g___eat things for them! (4) The Lord has done great

___hings for us; (14) we are g___ad indeed. (9)

Restore our fortun___s, O Lord, (5) I___ke the torrents in

the southern desert. (13) Those that so___ in tears (12)

shall reap re___oicing. (16)

Although they go forth ___eeping, (1) carrying the

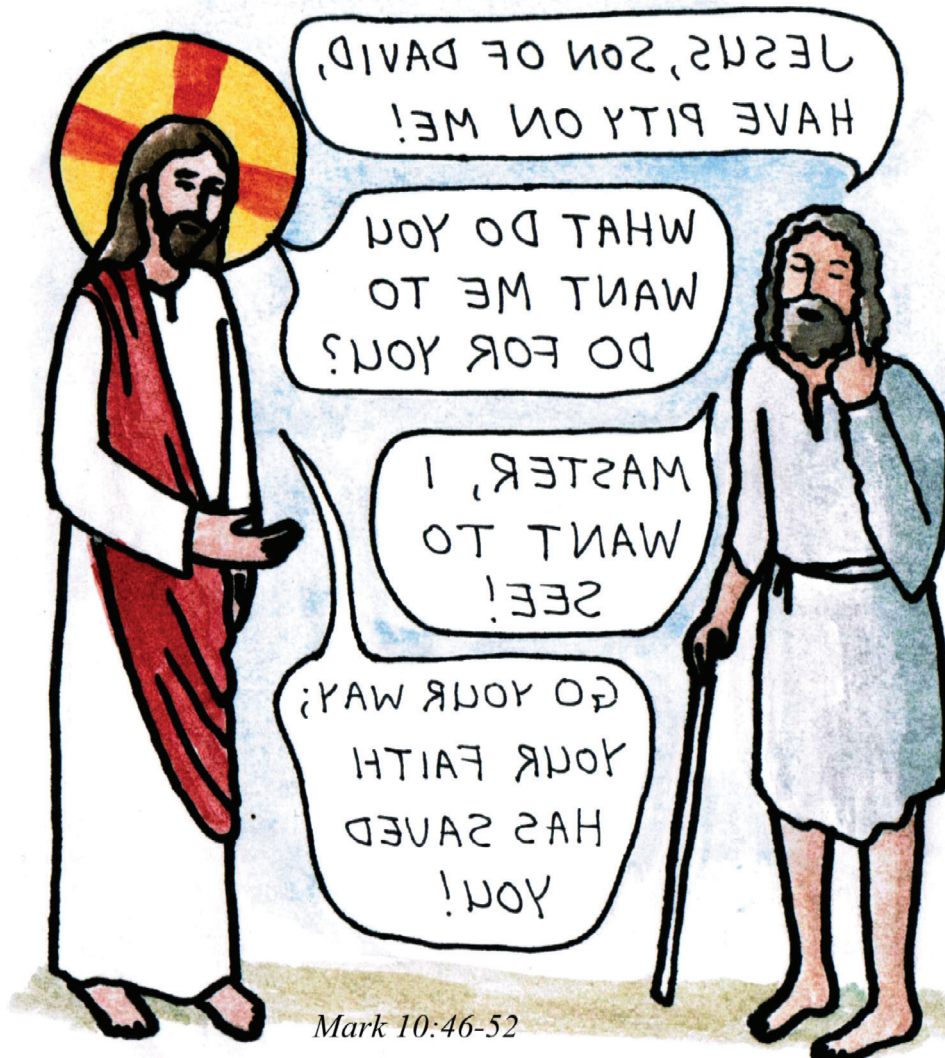
s___ed to be sown, (2) They shall com___ back rejoicing,

(10) carr___ing their sheave. (18)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15

16 17 18



Mark 10:46-52

What did Jesus and the blind man say to each other in today's Gospel reading?
Look in the mirror to find out!

L,I,D,F,O,A,H,R,T,L,E,I
,E,W,I,W,E,E,Y
WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY



Therese Tin

SITIAWAN: Youth are often called the future of the Church, but they must be nurtured in the right soil today to bear fruit tomorrow. With the support of Fr Francis Andrew, parish priest of the Church of St Francis de Sales (SFDS), an Overnight Youth Camp was held from September 28 to 29 in the church hall. The two-day camp brought together 48 young people from various ethnic backgrounds, including those of Myanmar descent. The camp's primary aim was to address the challenges youth face in schools and higher education institutions while also guiding them on their spiritual journey.

The camp was facilitated by Mr and Mrs Benedict Savarimuthu. Their inspiring talks, which centred around faith, youth leadership and personal growth, resonated well with the participants, encouraging them to explore their spiritual



29 September 2023

THE FUTURE IS NOW

journeys. On top of that, team building games and 'Bonding with Mother Earth' activities were done with talks and videos on pollution. The campers learnt the importance of protecting the Earth by participating in hands-on activities such as gardening and cleaning the church compound. These activities fostered spiritual growth, community bonding and leader-

ship skills among all the participants.

The evening commenced with a delightful BBQ dinner, providing a relaxed atmosphere for the youths to socialise and build friendships. Following dinner, the youths gathered for an uplifting praise and worship session led by the church choir and youth music group. This allowed the participants to express their

faith through songs and prayers, creating a spirit of unity and joy. The first day ended with the youths participating in adoration in the church. This solemn time of reflection and prayer offered a chance for personal connection with God, deepening the spiritual experience of the camp.

Day two began with the youth animating Sunday Mass. They took on various roles such as lectors, choir members, hospitality ministers and servers which empowered them to lead their community in worship. This was a significant opportunity for them to take part in ministries and contribute actively in the church. The camp ended with two more sessions on encouraging youth to join the church ministries. They were also reminded to continue their ministry during higher education and working life.

The overnight youth camp was a resounding success, achieving its goals of spiritual enrichment and community building. Participants left the camp with strengthened faith, newfound friendships and a deeper sense of purpose within their church community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr and Mrs Benedict Savarimuthu, the organising committee and the parish community of SFDS for their support and contributions. We look forward to future gatherings that continue to inspire and engage our youth.

MORE THAN 50,000 CHILEAN YOUTH MADE PILGRIMAGE TO

SHRINE OF ST TERESA OF THE ANDES

Buenos Aires, Argentina: "With Teresa, Pilgrims of Hope" was the theme that drew more than 50,000 young Chileans to the shrine of St. Teresa of the Andes last weekend in the town of Auco, Chile.

Pilgrims from different parts of the country and from greater Santiago walked 17 miles between old Chacabuco hill and the shrine, where the archbishop of Santiago, Fernando Chomali, offered the Eucharist.

The Oct 13 pilgrimage to the shrine of St Teresa of the Andes is a tradition in Chile. It takes place on the second Sunday of October and is organised by the Youth Vicariate with

the aim of giving thanks for the blessings the saint has obtained for them as well as to leave their intentions and their hopes with her, with faith placed in her intercession.

In the Mass, concelebrated by the auxiliary bishops of Santiago and by Father Rodrigo Segura, rector of the shrine, and Father Jonathan Muñoz, vicar of the Esperanza Joven, Chomali began his homily with a message asking for forgiveness from the young people: "Forgive us for the world that we have left you."

"Forgive us because we have not been able to stop the war that kills and does not



build. I ask for your forgiveness because we have not been able to stop the corruption that harms us so much. ... I also ask for your forgiveness for the abuses of all kinds, even within the Church, that pains us so much," he said.

In addition, he called on young people to make a journey of prayer, because "those who do not pray have nothing to say to the world."

"We as a Church cannot allow ourselves to be superficial. Let's not tolerate being anesthetised. Let us undertake the adventure

of a full life dedicated to others. I invite you to reflect, so that we might take life seriously," he urged.

For his part, Muñoz thanked the communities for their great participation: "We are grateful that today you are leaving renewed in hope, to become hope for the world and for the whole Church."

Finally, he emphasised: "It is hope that impels us to not believe that our journey ends here" and to be able to say "with Teresa, we are pilgrims of hope." **Julieta Villar, CNA**



Pilgrims from different parts of the country walked 17 miles to the shrine of St. Teresa of the Andes, where the archbishop of Santiago, Fernando Chomali, offered the Eucharist. (CNA photo/Courtesy photo / Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile)

Marlina Sara Sylvester

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO US?

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The Minor Basilica of St Anne celebrated the Confirmation of 37 students on October 12. Cardinal Sebastian Francis officiated the Confirmation Mass, with Fr Bernard Hyacinth concelebrating and Deacon Lazarus Jonathan and Deacon Dave Kameron assisting.

In his homily, Cardinal Sebastian posed a thought-provoking question to the congregation: “What is the Holy Spirit saying to me, you, and us today?” He emphasised the importance of seeking the spirit of wisdom, regardless of age, stating, “I encourage all of you to seek the spirit of wisdom. In the Book of Wisdom, it is said, ‘I prayed, and understanding was given me.’ It is crucial to have wisdom and understanding; without these, we are quite lost.”

The Cardinal encouraged the congregation to turn to the Word of God as their primary source of wisdom and understanding, adding, “Blessed are those who make the Word of God their main source of wisdom and understanding of what

is happening in their lives. Jesus’ first invitation was to ‘repent and believe in the Gospel.’”

He expressed hope that the newly confirmed young adults would make wise choices with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who he described as a spirit of creativity, inclusivity, and bridge-building.

Following the homily, the Confirmation rites commenced. The newly confirmed students had previously attended a three-day confirmation camp titled *Empower Me*, conducted by Martin Jalleh in September. This camp also welcomed students from City Parish, Penang, and Taiping Catholic Church, and included a session for parents.

At the conclusion of the Mass, the newly confirmed students presented the final hymn and received their certificates and gifts, marking a memorable milestone in their faith journey.



Embracing love, vocation and meaningful relationships



SEREMBAN: Embracing our beauty, uniqueness, and amazing qualities is a transformative journey. Human relationships are often shaped by love and lust. Love is a profound emotion that embodies care and commitment, while lust is driven by physical attraction and desire. The principles of being free, total, faithful, and fruitful serve as essential pillars for meaningful relationships.

Vocation is a journey toward God, distinct from a profession or career where one asks, “What do I want to be?” It manifests in various forms, such as priesthood, marriage, religious life, and consecrated single life, each providing opportunities to re-

spond to God’s love and serve others.

Dating with purity and purpose fosters the development of meaningful relationships. Ultimately, living a good and free life leads to fulfilment, grounded in meaningful connections, personal growth, values and ethics, and contributions to others.

This is what I learned during the two-day Theology of the Body (TOB) camp at the Church of the Visitation, Seremban, Oct 5 and 6. It was an enjoyable, engaging, and enlightening experience that helped me gain valuable insights. The facilitators were incredibly welcoming and answered our questions with enthusiasm. **Thanya**

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SPARKS PARISH COLLABORATION

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The St Anne’s Youth Group (StAY) held a fellowship gathering with young people from two other parishes

on October 5. After animating the Sunset Mass, the host adjourned to St Anne’s Dormitory with their guests. The event brought

together the Genesis Youths of Mercy from the Church of Divine Mercy, Sungai Ara, and the Risen Youth from Risen Christ Catholic

Church, Ayer Hitam, with a shared desire to build relationships and collaborate more closely.

We were blessed with the

presence of Fr Bernard Hyacinth, Friar Esmond Chua, OFM, Deacon Lazarus Jonathan, and Deacon Dave Kameron.

The fellowship began with ice-breaker games, followed by a worship session led by the StAY Worship Team. Benedict, the leader of Saint Anne’s Youth, expressed his gratitude to everyone for their efforts in making the event a success and highlighted the importance of working together.

The evening ended with dinner at the dormitory canteen, where the youth enjoyed time together, forging new friendships. With a strong spirit of collaboration sparked by this gathering, the youth from the three parishes look forward to future opportunities to strengthen their fellowship and work together on more joint events.



Modern-day Martyrs: The victims of blood minerals in Africa



Mining in Congo

VATICAN: This year, the Church celebrates the 60th anniversary of the canonisation of the Uganda Martyrs. They were canonised by Pope Paul VI on October 18 1964 in St Peter's Basilica, Rome.

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo and President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), has delivered a damning reflection on the exploitation of 'blood minerals' in Africa, which he said has led to the deaths of millions of people, displacement, human rights violations, wars and endemic poverty.

Speaking about the experience of his country, Cardinal Ambongo said the Democratic Republic of Congo was a glaring example of exploitation. Notwithstanding the abundance of mineral resources, the poverty experienced by the Congolese people was appalling.

The Cardinal quoted a statement previously made by the Congolese Bishops: "Instead of contributing to the development of our country and benefiting our people, minerals, oil, and forests have become the causes of our misfortune. How can we understand that our fellow citizens are stripped of their land without compensation because of the areas granted or sold to this or that mining or forestry operator?"

The Cardinal President of SECAM made the remarks at a Conference held in Rome and Online. He lifted the veil on the numerous and challenging situations experienced by ordinary villagers at the mercy of armed gangs, mercenaries, and faceless multinational mining corporations bent on extracting minerals regardless of the cost to human life.

The Conference under the theme, *The Blood of the Holy Martyrs, Seeds of Hope for an Integral Ecology*, was organised as an initiative of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Africa, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the canonisation of the Holy Martyrs of Uganda.

"Many people suffer and die because of the exploitation of mineral resources in Africa. The extraction and transportation of these minerals dispossess and displace families from their lands. There is often violent demolition of homes, water contamination, air pollution with heavy metals, cyanide released into nature, and serious damage to agricultural, livestock or fishing yields," the Cardinal narrated.

The Cardinal further narrated how blood

minerals such as those that power the world's smartphones and the batteries of electric vehicles leave a trail of death and destruction, creating a sense of generalised chaos that, in turn, feeds into a vicious circle of perpetual lawlessness.

The exploitation of critical and energy transition minerals in Africa, such as tin, tantalum, lithium, and cobalt, is fuelling armed conflicts, according to the Cardinal's statement. Multinational corporations and armed groups are locked in a cycle of financial gain, with control of mines funding ongoing wars. This situation leads to increased corruption, secessionist sentiments, and the vulnerability of local populations. The Cardinal emphasised that this system creates chaos, hindering development in affected regions.

Lessons learned from the Martyrs of Uganda
Sixty years after the canonisation of St Charles Lwanga and his companions, Cardinal Ambongo also spoke of lessons learned or "what are the fruits of the testimony of these valiant martyrs of Uganda in today's Africa?"

In the face of atrocities, the Cardinal Archbishop of Kinshasa echoed Pope Francis' document *Evangelii Gaudium*, which calls for Christian communities of missionary disciples who are permanently on mission (an outbound or outgoing Church). The Cardinal further said the Church in Africa could not afford to be silent in the face of the illegal exploitation of mineral resources on the Continent. He alluded to Pope Francis's Hands Off Africa Addresses made on his Apostolic Journey to the Democratic Republic of Congo in January 2023.

The Congolese prelate commended Christians and non-Christians, men and women, lay people and consecrated persons who have refused to fold their hands in the face of the tragedies unfolding in Africa's troubled regions.

Many of these men and women "at the risk of their lives, and in the name of Christian and human values, denounce these situations, fight for social justice, peace, human dignity and the safeguarding of our common home. Many lose their lives, and the earth continues to water the blood of these modern martyrs," he said.

Cardinal Ambongo reiterated that an outbound or outgoing African Church will act like the Good Samaritan — always at the side of the marginalised and those abandoned by the side of the road. Referring to hope, Christian hope, he said, is something quite different from illusory hope. **Paul Samasumo, Vatican News**

MEMORIAM

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12th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of
Mr Mathalaimuthu



Departed: 30 Oct 2012

Though you are no longer with us, you will never be forgotten. May your memory be forever held in the pages of this book.

Wife : Madam Victoria
Daughter : Helen Rita
Son : Eric Steven
Grandchildren: Rishwariya : Vasunddra

15th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of



Mr Arokiasamy
s/o Gnanapragasam

From the Lord:
17-08-1939

To the Lord:
28-10-2009

Dad

You are the greatest gift that we ever had in our life that came from God.

Deeply missed and forever remembered by:
Wife: Madam A. Mangalamary,
Children, Grandchildren,
Sons-in-law & daughters-in-law.

For everything
there is a
season, and a
time for every
matter under
heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

34th Anniversary
In Loving
Memory of

Aisu s/o
Sinnathamby

Born:
01-05-1937

Departed:
25-10-1990

Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his saints.
- Psalms 116:15

Lovingly missed by
wife, daughter, sons, daughters-in-law,
grandchildren & loved ones.

NOTICE

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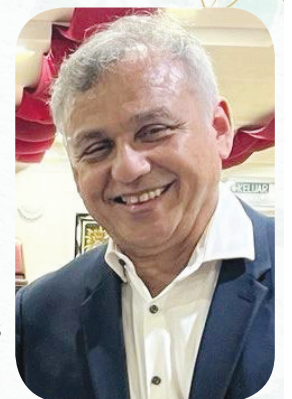
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FIRST ANNIVERSARY IN EVER LOVING MEMORY OF

As long as we live,
they too will live,
for they are now a
part of us as
we remember them.
When we are weary
and in need of
strength;
We remember them.

Forever in our hearts
and deeply missed
by wife, son, sisters,
family, friends
and college
community.



ANAND PON

(30 December 1956 –
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Message for the Feast of Deepavali

Promoting harmony amidst diversity and despite differences

Dear Friends,

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue sends you its most joyful and prayerful greetings as you celebrate Deepavali, the festival of lights, on October 31 this year. May God, the source of light, fill your minds and hearts with peace and joy, and your families and communities with grace and happiness!

More than ever our cities and countries are increasingly becoming diverse. People of different cultures, religions, ethnicities, languages and ideologies live side by side, either by choice or chance, in almost every part of the globe. This diversity is viewed by most as a great source of mutual growth, learning and enrichment. At the same time, it is also rejected in some parts of the world because it is seen as a potential threat to harmony, even leading to conflict. Concerned as we are over this matter, we would like to share with you some thoughts on how both Christians and Hindus can promote harmony amidst diversity and despite differences.

Throughout history human beings have always experienced difficulties living in harmony. Indeed, this has been the case whenever there is diversity and differences among peoples, resulting sometimes in displays of both

hostile and subtle resistance. Nevertheless, as Pope Francis said, "In the dynamics of history, and in the diversity of ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the seeds of a vocation to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another" (Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 96, Oct 3, 2020). Diversity, therefore, invites efforts to build harmony. Moreover, seeds of harmony can be sowed and harvested only through "respect for diversity by offering opportunities for advancement and social integration to all" (Ibid. 220).

In the divine project, diversity and differences are not meant to be a threat to anyone's existence but a gift for harmonious coexistence. They are relational mosaics of a pluriform edifice in which humans of all colours, creeds and cultures can live together. Moreover, they display our common humanity in pluriform expressions. They enrich us and respect diversity.

Unfortunately, the divine vision of fostering harmony through God's own power, in and through diversity is supplanted by ideologies that favour exclusion, discrimination and conformity on both the individual and collective level. Religious fundamentalism, extremism,

fanaticism, racism and hyper nationalism in different parts of the world are some examples of ideologies that destroy harmony and give rise to suspicion, prejudice, mistrust, hatred and fear among people, thereby impeding them from forging bonds that sustain human fraternity and social friendship.

There is a need more than ever to rediscover the divine plan for humanity and nurture in our communities, cities and countries the spirit of fraternity that binds everyone together as God's children and as brothers and sisters. As a result, we will be able to build bridges and defeat all forms of moral, economic and social distress and disharmony (cf. Pope Francis, Address, *Meeting with the Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps, Jakarta*, Sept 4, 2024).

Sowing the seeds of harmony amidst diversity and despite differences is a practical necessity that calls for concrete action and collective effort from all individuals, families, educational institutions, media, communities and nations. All need to work towards breaking down stereotypes, fostering empathy, sensitivity and respect for those who are different from us. We also need to promote dialogue at all levels for a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of the richness

of diversity and differences. With the immense potential religions have to create conducive conditions for harmony in society, all religious leaders have the sacred duty to encourage their followers to strive for harmony.

As believers grounded in our own respective religious traditions and as persons with shared commitment to strengthening harmonious coexistence in society, may we, Christians and Hindus, join hands with the people of other religious traditions and with people of good will, do all that we can to promote harmony amidst diversity and despite differences "with a sense of responsibility and in a spirit of fraternity and inclusiveness" (Pope Francis, *Meeting with Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps, Singapore*, Sept 12, 2024).

We wish you once again a joyful celebration of Deepavali!

Miguel Card ayuso
Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, MCCCJ
Prefect

Janakarathne
Msgr. Indunil Janakarathne Kodithuwakku
Kankanamalage
Secretary

Pope's liturgical celebrations in November and early December



Vatican Media

VATICAN: The Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff has published the schedule for Pope Francis' liturgical celebrations for November to mid-December.

The Holy Father's first commitment during that period is Mass in suffrage for deceased Cardinals and Bishops who passed away during the year, which will take place on November 4 at 11.00am in St Peter's Basilica.

On Nov 17, Pope Francis will celebrate Mass for the Eighth World Day of the Poor, which has its theme this year "The prayer of the poor rises up to God." The Eucharistic celebration will take place at 10.00am in St Peter's Basilica.

For the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, on Nov 24, the World Youth Day at the diocesan level will be celebrated, as established by Pope

Francis.

That morning, the Holy Father will preside over Mass at 9.30am in St Peter's Basilica.

The first celebration in the month of December will be on Saturday, Dec 7, for the Ordinary Public Consistory for the creation of new Cardinals, at 4.00pm in St Peter's Basilica.

The next day, Dec 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Francis will preside over Mass at 9.30am with the new Cardinals and the College of Cardinals.

Keeping with tradition, on the same day at 4.00pm, the Holy Father will perform the traditional act of veneration of the Immaculate Conception in Piazza di Spagna.

On Dec 12, on the occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pope Francis will once again celebrate Mass in St Peter's Basilica at 6.00pm. **Vatican News**

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