The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

TERHAD | PP 8460/11/2012 (030939) | ISSN: 1394-3294 | Vol: 33 No. 35 | October 4, 2026 | www.heraldmalaysia.com

Enclosed with this issue is a 16-page supplement on MPC2026

Celebrate Listen Walk (cf. Is 2:2-5) MPC2026

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Phil 4:6-7



Celebrating the fullness of life ■ P4



Miri welcomes its first Berawan priest ■ P12



YOU Mad 3.0 A missionary experience at Batu Arang ■ P16



Do less and do it better

Patricia Pereira

KUALA LUMPUR: "Do less and do it better." Pope Leo XIV offered this counsel to priests and pastoral workers in the Diocese of Rome as he invited them to pause, examine the fruit of their work and discern together where to direct their energy.

His words arrive at a fitting moment for the Church in Malaysia. With the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026) concluded, the bishops and dioceses are weighing what was heard in Sibu as they discern concrete pastoral pathways. The Pope's questions offer a way to examine the life of the Church with honesty.

Opening Rome's new pastoral year at the Basilica of St John Lateran on September 18, Pope Leo proposed a shared method of pastoral evaluation. Communities should revisit what has happened, recognise what has borne fruit, understand what has failed and seek the reasons together. He urged them, where possible, to listen also to people who seldom take part in Church life. His address was directed to Rome, but the method he proposed speaks to a task now facing the Malaysian Church.

At MPC2026, delegates from all nine dioceses shared their experiences and reflected on four areas central to the Church's mission: Family, Church, Ecology and Society. The pastoral pathways that emerge will need to take account of the different realities of dioceses and communities across Malaysia.

For Pope Leo, the question at the heart of pastoral evaluation is why. What Gospel purpose drives an activity? What need does it meet? Why do some initiatives help people grow in faith while others remain isolated? Why do some people participate while others stay away? Asking these questions together, he said, helps a community recognise what should be retained, improved, set aside or introduced.

The Pope began his reflection with Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb. She recognised the risen Lord when he called her by name. For Pope Leo, that encounter asks the Church to consider whom it meets and how. People in its communities can feel invisible, or they can be seen, known and called by name. Pastoral plans have their place, but their purpose becomes clearer when the Church listens to the people whose lives they hope to touch.

He proposed three areas for evaluation. First, does pastoral work help people encounter Christ and bring the Gospel into contact with their lives? Attendance and good organisation alone cannot answer that question. Second, does it build communities where people are welcomed, accompanied, valued and able to share responsibility? The Pope particularly urged attentive listening to young people, both within and beyond existing Church activities.

Third, does the Church live among and serve the people around it? Speaking of Rome, Pope Leo said the city was the place of the Church's mission. Its communities must pay attention to people's hopes, vulnerabilities and questions, including those beyond the parish. In Malaysia, that question can be asked in an urban neighbourhood, a small town or a rural community: do we know what people around us are facing?

A fourth concern runs through all three: the formation of the People of God. The Pope asked whether pastoral activities help people grow in faith, become missionary disciples, take responsibility within the Church and develop a mature faith expressed in concrete choices and service. Formation, in this sense, shapes how people live their faith long after a programme has ended.

These questions can give substance to discernment after Sibu. If a parish programme attracts a crowd, does it help participants encounter Christ? If a ministry has run for years, does it still respond to a need? Who remains on the sidelines — young people, families under strain or people who have drifted away — and have we listened to their experience?

Pope Leo also urged priests to listen before responding, recognise the gifts of lay people and allow others to share responsibility. A community in which everything depends on the parish priest, he warned, is fragile. His call to "do less and do it better" gives pastoral workers room to consider what deserves their attention and what may need to change.

For Malaysia, the value of any pastoral pathway will lie in how it guides decisions on the ground. Can a parish name the need it is addressing, share responsibility for the response and return later to ask whether its work has helped people encounter Christ? Such questions could help turn the discernment in Sibu into an ongoing habit in dioceses and parishes.

Pope Leo's challenge leaves the Church with a practical question after Sibu: why do we do what we do, and what fruit does it bear?

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1994

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

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


EDITOR
Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my


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


JOURNALIST
Christina Lazaroo
christina@herald.com.my


GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my


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


MANDARIN
Adelina Wong
chinese@herald.com.my


TAMIL
Perzeus James
tamil@herald.com.my


ADMIN ASSISTANT
Rachael Sharma
admin@herald.com.my

SOCIAL MEDIA
socmed@herald.com.my

ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

Social Media

www.heraldmalaysia.com

@heraldmalaysia

heraldmalaysia
Herald Snapshot

@heraldsnapshot

Disclaimer:

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

Become a voice in the HERALD community

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A story too large for 16 pages



A 16-page supplement may appear substantial — until one tries to place within it the experiences, voices and movements of the Spirit that unfolded during the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026.

For the *HERALD* team, the work began well before we arrived in Sibu. We studied the Convention's background, worked through a packed programme, identified possible angles and arranged interviews. Once it began, there were homilies and presentations to follow, photographs to take, delegates to interview and details to verify — often while several significant moments unfolded at once.

Then came the work after the work: listening again to recordings, deciphering hurried notes, checking names and quotations, selecting photographs and deciding what could fit on the page.

This supplement, inserted with this issue of *HERALD*, is the result of that effort. It cannot recount every conversation, testimony, prayer or personal encounter. Some of the Convention's deepest movements may never appear in print because they occurred quietly within hearts. We hope these pages offer readers a rounded picture of its history and purpose, its prayer and discernment, its celebrations and challenges, and the hopes it awakened for the Church in Malaysia.

Limited space demands editorial choices. Every participant experienced MPC2026 differently, and a detail that seems minor to one person may hold deep significance for another. A passing comment, an uncomfortable question or a small gesture can reveal something about how we listen and journey together.

The Convention brought moments of grace and unity, alongside limitations and areas requiring greater attentiveness. Acknowledging these does not diminish the work of its organisers. Honest reflection helps the Church learn and grow. Our responsibility is to report with accuracy, fairness, independence and charity, giving readers the context they need to reflect for themselves.

In this sense, reporting MPC2026 became a lesson in synodality for us. Its theme, *Celebrate, Listen, Walk Together*, offered an editorial compass: celebrate the graces, listen widely and help readers discern what the experience asks of us. That meant hearing voices from different dioceses, cultures, ministries and experiences, then returning to our notes and recordings to ask whether we had understood them correctly. Like Conversation in the Spirit, good reporting requires attention, patience and humility.

The bishops' pastoral sharings raised questions that will remain with the Malaysian Church after the Convention. They spoke of conversion, going into the deep and casting the net, listening to the cries of families, society and creation, and building bridges rather than barriers. They reminded delegates that unity must be built, every member has a part to play, and the Church's mission extends beyond its walls.

Many are understandably waiting for the concrete pastoral pathways and the overarching Pastoral Statement of MPC2026. What was heard across the nine dioceses and during the Convention must be carefully gathered, prayed over and synthesised. Genuine discernment needs time if those pathways are to reflect the voices heard and the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading the Church. This waiting is part of the synodal process; the work now is to remain attentive to what has been entrusted to us.

Preparing the supplement has reaffirmed for the *HERALD* team the value of preparation, accuracy and teamwork. It also reflects the quiet labour of colleagues reporting in Sibu and those holding the fort back home. Every interview, photograph, transcription, fact-check and page contributes to the story readers now hold.

We offer these pages without claiming to have told the entire story. They are our best effort to listen carefully, report honestly and help the wider Church enter into what was experienced in Sibu. May they encourage readers to reflect, question, celebrate the graces received and listen to voices they may have overlooked.

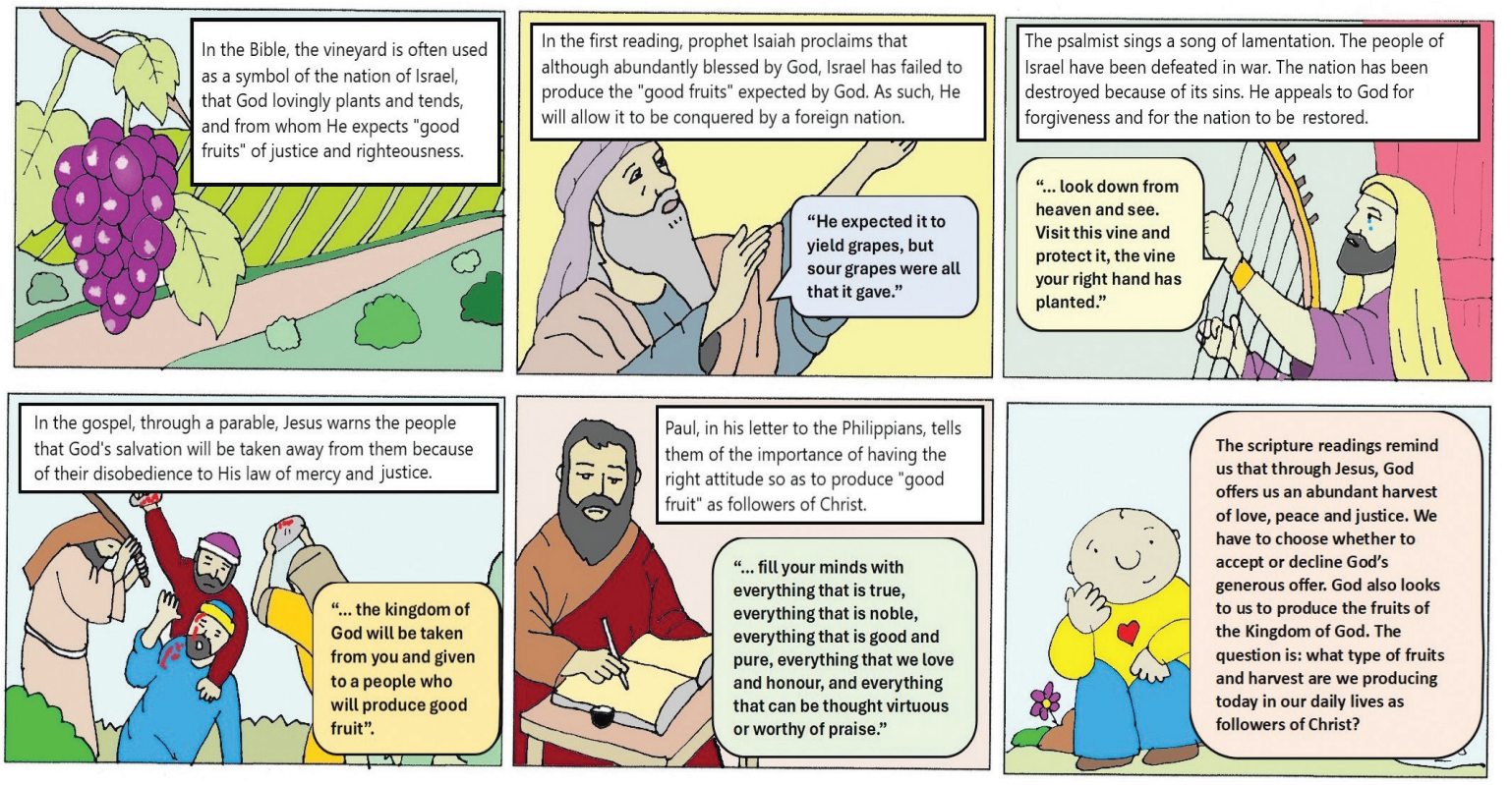
MPC2026 has ended, but the journey it renewed now returns to our dioceses, parishes, families and communities. The next chapter will be written in how faithfully we live what we have heard.

Patricia Pereira

Reflecting on our
Sunday Readings
with Dr Steven Selvaraju

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Readings: Isaiah 5:1-7 | Philippians 4:6-9 | Gospel: Matthew 21:33-44

BEAR GOOD FRUITS



Living water, renewed commitment

KLANG: The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL), marked the Season of Creation through English and Tamil Masses that called parishioners to recognise the natural world as God's gift and embrace their responsibility as its stewards.

Animated by the parish's *Laudato Si'* ministry, the celebration centred on the theme *Living Water,* highlighting water as sacred and life-giving. It sustains humanity, nourishes the earth and supports every living creature, yet remains threatened by pollution, wastage and environmental destruction.

At the 8.00am Mass in English celebrated by Fr Gregory Chan, about 20 children from the Catechetical ministry dressed as animals and carried placards promoting care for Creation. Their colourful presence reflected both the beauty and vulnerability of the natural world, reminding the congregation that humanity has been entrusted with protecting creatures that cannot speak for themselves.

During the offertory, the children presented biblical items symbolising the nourishment and abundance provided through Creation. Each offering pointed to a simple truth: everything received from the earth is ultimately God's gift and must be treated with gratitude and care.



Children dressed as animals carrying placards promoting care for creation.

The *Laudato Si'* ministry also distributed pocket-sized Creation Justice Commitment Cards, encouraging parishioners to translate ecological awareness into practical daily action. Fr Gregory blessed the cards before they were distributed.

At the Mass in Tamil, Fr Gnana Selvam presented and explained each creation-themed poster, connecting its message with Christian faith and everyday choices. He stressed that caring for creation lies at the heart of humanity's relationship with God, neighbour and future generations.

Addressing the elders, he asked: "Will we leave our children the same beautiful, life-giving world that was so generously entrusted to us?"

His question challenged the congregation to consider not only what humanity has received, but what it will leave behind. Decisions about water, waste, consumption and the treatment of living creatures carry consequences for the whole of creation.

Through the participation of the clergy, children, ministries and parishioners, the celebration moved from awareness to reflection and from reflection to commitment. It also affirmed that ecological responsibility cannot be confined to one ministry or season; it must become part of Christian discipleship and daily living.

May God's Living Water renew hearts and inspire the faithful to protect our common home for generations to come. **Dato' Seri Ann Marianthony, *Laudato Si'* Ministry, OLL Klang**

Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

October

5-23	Meeting – *Amoris Laetitia,* Rome

Malacca Johore Diocese

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

October

4	Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of Divine Mercy, Skudai
4	Confirmation – Church of the Holy Spirit, Chapel of St James, Merlimau
10	Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru
10	Confirmation – Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram
10	Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of St Theresa, Masai
12-13	Meeting & Outing – South Johor Clergy
14	Diocesan Finance Council Meeting – MAJODI Centre
15	MJDYPN meets the Bishop – MAJODI Centre
17	Council of Pastoral Services Meeting – Church of St Louis, Kluang
18	Confirmation – Church of St Theresa, Melaka
18	Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #289

F12 MJD NEWS UPDATES

Welcome dear friends:

Back from ***MPC2026.*** Dragged into the joking politician's inappropriate analogy. Varied reactions among the faithful, the netizens, the politicians and the ministers. Celebrated the ***63rd Malaysia Day*** of unfulfilled promises and agreements. Shouting impotent ***3R rhetoric*** that reflects "*cakap satu, bikin lain*". What an ***eventful time*** we are witnessing. Never lose heart. The phoenix rises from the ashes.

Local Takes! Tired, yet patient. So much unrest and disruption. The hazy hot spell and destructive flash floods, laws respected and laws flaunted, quick-swooping authorities and slow-moving enforcers.

Constitution ignored and politics dictates. Neverending Malaysian *wayang*. Signs of elite gangsterism, lawlessness and politics of the preservists.

The ordinary continue to work to put food on their tables. The "trusted, their families and cronies" live off the sweat and tears of others. The people are tired and weary. They are very aware of karma: what one sows comes back. They believe that justice is not blind.

Reading the Signs: Looking Ahead
On "pastoral evaluation" to the Diocese of Rome: Pope Leo explained that it is a process of stopping to reread what has happened, recognising what has borne fruit, understanding what has not worked and seeking together the reasons why. It should involve the whole ecclesial community and, where possible, also listen to those who do not regularly participate in Church life.
On Seoul WYD2027: Archbishop of Seoul told 400 reps from 100 countries: You are not simply gathering participants. You are inviting a young person to encounter the Lord."

On "Aligning Giving, Investing and Faith" in the UK: Catholics in Fundraising say, "It's not only how I give money to charitable causes. It's also how I invest, how my investments align [with] my faith, how I pass on either to charity or to the next generation."
On suffering around us: Earthquake disrupts education of 8000 Indonesian children, killing 38 and forcing the cancellation of a Catholic Festival. Colombian NGOs warned of trafficking of children during the recent earthquake. Displacement of civilians continues in Gaza, Lebanon and Somalia.
On Solidarity with Indonesia and Nepal: The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia called for a nationwide solidarity collection on the September 26 - 27 weekend for Indonesia and Nepal.

Thought for the Week: The Bloody Nursery
Confidently, a woman left her child asleep in the crib with her old faithful dog to watch over. And she went off on her errands. On her return, she was met with a messy scene. The crib was overturned, Nappies and clothes torn into shreds. Blood stained all over. She began to scream and wail.

Hearing her cries, the faithful dog emerged from under the bed, covered in blood and licking its mouth. The woman went berserk, grabbed a metal pipe, and beat the dog to death. Thereafter, she searched for the baby's remains.

Then on the blindside of the bed, she found the baby, safe and unhurt. As she stooped to pick up the baby, she saw the remains of a snake torn to pieces. Then reality dawned on her: a fierce battle had taken place; her dog had fought to protect her baby. She had killed the protector. Her dog laid dead in the middle of the nursery.

Lesson from the killing: What we think and what it is, are very different. Presumption excludes reality and truth. Do not be hasty. Take time to judge or act. Assuming kills.

QnQ? Q asks: How do we know we love God?
Love has three and only three intimacies: speech, vision, and touch. These three intimacies God has chosen to make His love intelligible to our poor hearts.

God has spoken He told us that He loves us: that is *Revelation.* God has been seen: That is *Incarnation.* God has touched us by His grace: That is *Redemption.*

Well indeed, therefore, may He say: "What more could I do for My vineyard than what I have already done? What other proof could I give of My love than to exhaust Myself in the intimacies of love? What else could I do to show that my own Sacred Heart is not less generous than your own?

If we answer these questions right, then we will ***begin to repay love with love.*** Then we will return speech with speech which will be our prayer; vision with vision which will be our faith; touch with touch which will be our communion." ***Archbishop Fulton Sheen: The Eternal Galilean***

The Spirit @ work: "It's not our mission to change or direct another person's path. There is no wrong or right way. We each have our own life's journey and our mission is just to become a light that enlightens other people's path." ***Jan McKingley Hilado***

Something to tickle you: "The wound is the place where the light enters you." ***Rumi***

Bishop Bernard Paul

World Mental Health Day event to put caregivers first

KUALA LUMPUR: The often-unseen emotional and physical burden carried by caregivers will take centre stage at this year's World Mental Health Day event organised by the Archdiocesan Mental Health Ministry (AMHM).

Held under the theme *Care for Caregivers*, the event will take place on ***Saturday, October 10, from 8.30am to 4.30pm at MAHSA Avenue International College, Kuala Lumpur.*** AMHM is organising the programme in collaboration with the Malaysia Mind-Body Medicine Practitioners Association (MBMPA).

The programme recognises that caregivers are not limited to trained professionals. They include parents caring for children, adult children supporting ageing parents, spouses tending to an ill partner, guardians and anyone responsible for another person's wellbeing.

While caregiving can be deeply fulfilling, it can also bring exhaustion, anxiety, grief, frustration, loneliness and guilt. These struggles are often hidden beneath the daily responsibility of looking after someone else, leaving caregivers reluctant to admit that they are overwhelmed or need help.

The event aims to give caregivers a voice while equipping them with practical skills and strategies to protect their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. It will also encourage families and communities to recognise that care must be shared through practical assistance, attentive listening and regular opportunities for caregivers to rest.

Supporting caregivers is essential not only for those who depend on them, but also for the caregivers' own dignity and wellbeing. Seeking help, setting realistic limits or taking a break does not diminish their love or commitment.

For Christians, the call to care for the sick and vulnerable must also extend to those carrying the responsibility of care. Christ's invitation — "Come to Me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28) — speaks to caregivers who may feel they must bear their burdens alone.

Although centred on caregivers, the programme is open to everyone. It also seeks to promote greater understanding of mental health, challenge harmful stereotypes and help build families, parishes and communities where people feel safe to seek support.

Registration is available at *https://forms.gle/fW6vo7a52wH4wZMW8.*

Celebrating the fullness of life

Fr Philip Chua



PENANG: Each September, clergy from the three dioceses of Peninsular Malaysia step away from their pastoral responsibilities for a time of prayer, reflection and renewal. Held in three batches in Cameron Highlands, Penang and Johor, the 2026 Annual Clergy Retreat saw one group gather at the Stella Maris Retreat Centre from September 13 to 18, under the guidance of Redemptorist priest Fr Maurice O. O'Mahony, CSsR, *pic*.



Centred on the theme *Celebrate the Fullness of Life,* the retreat invited the priests to step away from the demands of pastoral ministry and enter more deeply into prayer, silence and renewed friendship with Jesus Christ. Through spiritual conferences, personal reflection, the Eucharist, Adoration and priestly fellowship, they were encouraged to rediscover their dignity, vocation and identity as disciples.

Beyond the past

Fr O'Mahony began by reminding participants that, although people are shaped by their families, cultures and experiences, no one is condemned to remain a product of the past.

Each person bears a sacred mystery, having been created in the image of God. Past wounds, failures, rejection and feelings of inadequacy do not have the final word. In Christ, there is always more to discover and become.

Drawing on Jesus' promise, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10), the retreat encouraged the priests to celebrate their giftedness, humanity, experience and consecration. The Church's greatest resource is not its buildings or possessions, but the People of God through whom He continues His work.

The priests reflected on the movement from their present reality — "who I am" — towards their God-given potential — "who I am becoming". This requires leaving familiar patterns and responding anew to Christ's invitation: "Follow Me." They were invited to recognise whatever might prevent them from living fully and freely in Christ, including fear, self-doubt, past hurts, rejection and difficulty trusting God.

Receiving divine compassion

Priests readily show compassion to those who suffer, yet may respond to their own struggles with harshness or criticism. Fr O'Mahony explained that self-compassion means acknowledging one's suffering and imperfections with honesty, kindness and understanding. It does not excuse wrongdoing, but enables a person to receive God's mercy, learn from mistakes and continue growing.

God knows each person completely — in generosity and selfishness, success and failure, courage and discouragement — and still loves faithfully. Priests who receive this compassionate love are better able to communicate God's mercy to those in their pastoral care.

Radical gratitude

Drawing on Mary Joan Leddy's reflections, the retreat presented radical gratitude as a way of seeing life anew. It begins when people stop taking Creation, others and their own lives for granted, shifting their attention from what is lacking to what has already been received as gift.

Each person possesses a dignity that cannot be earned or bought. Yet negativity and unresolved hurts can distort the way people view themselves and others. Participants were invited to examine patterns of complaint, uncharitable conversation and the projection of personal struggles onto others. Gratitude creates room for patience and compassion, and finds its fullest Christian expression in the Eucharist.

Renewing friendship with Christ

The retreat was presented as a journey into the wilderness, a sacred setting throughout salvation history where people encounter God away from familiar surroundings.

To retreat is to step back from daily responsibilities to encounter God and oneself more truthfully. Participants were encouraged to reduce their use of mobile phones, email and other distractions, and to cultivate silence, solitude and personal prayer. Grace does not operate magically; like Christ standing at the door and knocking, the Lord awaits a free response.

At the heart of the retreat was Jesus Christ. The priests reflected on what drew them to Him, what sustains their faith, why they answered His call and how they would respond to the question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Jesus cannot be reduced to an inspiring teacher or historical figure. He is the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour. Recognising Him requires conversion and a new way of life. The Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows also invited reflection on Mary's faithful presence beside her Son.

Prayer and dependence on God

Reflecting on Psalm 127 — "If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labour" — Fr O'Mahony emphasised that prayer holds together the priest's faith, vocation, sacrifice and hope of abundant life.

He distinguished between "saying prayers" and entering prayer as a personal encounter with God. Catholics are formed by the great prayers of the Church, but prayer is also, as Clement of Alexandria described it, a conversation with God. It is not an optional addition to ministry: a priest cannot lead God's people unless he first allows himself to be led by the Lord.

Psalm 127 also challenges the illusion of self-sufficiency. Illness, burnout, crisis and vulnerability can reveal human limitations, but may also become moments of grace that free a person from believing he must manage everything by his own strength. As St Augustine wrote: "You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

The priests were encouraged to renew their daily commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours, Scripture, personal prayer and time before the Blessed Sacrament. Prayer should not be left to chance, but given a regular time and place.

Prayer is also essential for discernment. Through attentiveness to consolation and desolation, supported by spiritual accompaniment, a person gradually recognises where the Holy Spirit is leading. The aim is to become a contemplative in action — remaining aware of God's presence while celebrating the sacraments, accompanying parishioners and carrying out the ordinary work of ministry.

A rule of life and priestly self-care

The retreat encouraged priests to develop a realistic rule of life, allowing appropriate time for prayer, ministry, administration, meals, friendship, recreation and rest. Priestly self-care is responsible stewardship, not self-indulgence. Priests need trustworthy friendships, spiritual direction and regular renewal. A sabbatical may mean a prolonged period away, but it can also begin with a protected hour of quiet and rest.

Participants were urged to establish healthy boundaries and not accept every request out of guilt or fear. Total availability is neither human nor sustainable. Saying no respectfully can protect a priest's capacity to offer a freer and more faithful yes to God and His people.



Fr O' Mahony praying over the clergy.

Eucharist, discipleship and mission

Further conferences explored the Paschal Mystery — Christ's suffering, death, Resurrection and glorification — as the centre of Christian life. Through Baptism, Christians share in the new life of Easter; through the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, Christ's saving work is made present and its grace received.

The Eucharist is the Church's treasure and the sacramental presence of the risen Christ. Through Holy Orders, the priest is configured to Christ the High Priest and Good Shepherd. His Eucharistic identity must be lived in service of God's people and conformed to the mystery of the Cross.

Discipleship was presented as a lifelong relationship with Jesus. It requires conversion, the surrender of comfort, status and self-interest, and a willingness to follow Christ through the Cross to the Resurrection. For priests, this means continually renewing their original response to God's call and remaining open to the Holy Spirit.

The retreat emphasised that mission belongs first to God, not to any individual priest, parish or institution. Every baptised person shares in this mission and the universal call to holiness. Synodality calls the whole Church to listen together to the Holy Spirit, while the liturgy embodies this shared vocation. The faithful are not spectators, and the Eucharist does not belong to the celebrant; it is the Lord's Eucharist and the action of the whole Church.

Renewed for mission

As the retreat concluded, the clergy were invited to return to their communities renewed in faith, strengthened in fraternity and recommitted to servant leadership.

Its central message was clear: God calls each person beyond the limitations of the past into the fullness of life offered through Jesus Christ. This life is received with radical gratitude, sustained by prayer, nourished by the Eucharist and expressed through faithful discipleship, healthy self-giving and loving service.

Echoing the retreat's final prayer, the clergy asked: "Lord, make us truly men of prayer — men who walk in Your presence all the days of our lives."



Faith draws thousands to historic Santa Cruz Chapel

Bernard Anthony

MELAKA: Several thousand faithful gathered at the historic Santa Cruz Chapel on a hilltop in Malim to celebrate the annual Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

From September 10 to 13, pilgrims from across Malaysia and Singapore formed long queues to light candles, pray and venerate the Holy Cross. Many also participated in the daily Eucharistic Adoration and solemn Masses.

Fr Lionel Thomas, chapel administrator and parish priest of the Church of St Peter, was the main celebrant and preacher on Sept 12. Over 1,000 faithful attended the Eucharistic Adoration and evening Mass.

In his homily, Fr Lionel reflected on the human tendency towards selfishness and self-centredness. Through Baptism, however, Christians belong to God and are called to reflect His image through love, compassion, mercy and gentleness.

He said the hallmark of a Christian is the willingness to pray for one's enemies and forgive those who cause hurt or disappointment. Rather than allowing anger and misunderstanding to create division, Christians should seek dialogue and reconciliation.

"If God has forgiven us in Confession, we too must forgive others," he said, urging the faithful not to perpetuate the cycle of unforgiveness.

Reflecting on Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, Fr Lionel reminded the congregation that those who have received God's mercy must extend the same mercy to others.

"Pray for the grace to forgive," he urged.

Large tents and LCD screens were installed this year to accommodate the crowds and enable pilgrims to participate more fully in the celebrations. Stalls selling religious articles, candles and flowers were also well patronised.

At the conclusion of Mass, Fr Lionel shared that the owner of the land below the chapel had agreed in principle to sell a portion of the land to the Church. The process is expected to take about a year to complete.

He also revealed that, after serving as chapel administrator for the past decade, this would be his final Santa Cruz feast as he awaits a new posting early next year.

Describing his years at the chapel as meaningful and beautiful, Fr Lionel said he had been deeply moved by the faith of the pilgrims who returned year after year.

"The same old wooden cross, moved by your faith — you edified me," he said, expressing his hope that the chapel would continue to be preserved as a holy place.

Fr Lionel has also promoted Eucharistic Adoration throughout his ministry at the Church of St Peter, where it is held daily before Mass. He founded St Peter's Cupboard, a parish outreach ministry serving poor and vulnerable families, particularly around the Portuguese Settlement. The parish also supports an animal shelter in the Jasin district by providing food for its dogs.

The celebrations concluded on Sept 14 with Eucharistic Adoration and a Thanksgiving Mass at St Peter's, celebrated by Fr Lionel.

Some 400 faithful attended, including elderly people and those with physical disabilities who were unable to climb the hill in Malim. They were given an opportunity to venerate the Cross after Mass.

The Santa Cruz Chapel traces its history to around 1850, although some accounts date the construction of the present structure to between 1870 and 1880. Its origins are rooted in Melaka's Portuguese-Eurasian Catholic heritage and the discovery of a small wooden cross on the hilltop, which local tradition links to the Dutch era in the late 18th century.

Generations of pilgrims have since come to venerate the Cross — the sign of God's immense love, Christ's victory over sin and death, and the triumph of love over hatred and hope over despair.

Feast calls faithful to wholehearted discipleship

KAMPUNG PANDAN: Hundreds of parishioners and pilgrims gathered daily at the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health for its nine-day novena and feast from August 31 to September 8.

The celebration culminated on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with some 1,200-faithful taking part in an hour-long candlelight procession through the residential streets of Kampung Pandan.

Msgr Henry Rajoo from Penang was the main celebrant and preacher throughout the novena, alongside parish priest Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam.

The celebration was centred on the theme "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5), drawing on the wedding feast at Cana, where Jesus performed His first miracle and revealed His glory to His disciples.

Throughout the novena, Msgr Henry reflected on Mary's attentiveness to human need and her role in leading people to Jesus. Her simple instruction to the servants — "Do whatever He tells you" — remains an invitation to trust, obey and surrender to Christ, even when His plan is not yet clear.

Reflecting on the wedding feast running out of wine, Msgr Henry invited the faithful to consider what they do when the "wine of joy" runs out in their own lives. In moments of struggle, limitation or uncertainty, he said, they should entrust themselves to Jesus and believe in God's timing.

He also challenged them to examine whether they were giving themselves wholeheartedly to God and to their families, or offering only what was left over.

Drawing on the stone jars filled at Jesus' command, Msgr Henry urged the faithful to fill their own "jars" to the brim with faith, regular prayer and obedience.

"Do the best you can and let Jesus do the miracle," he said, explaining that the servants did what was within their ability by filling the jars with water, while Jesus brought about the transformation.

The miracle at Cana, he added, did not only change water into wine; it transformed the disciples, leading them to believe in Jesus. In the same way, Christians are called not simply to follow religious customs or inherited traditions, but to develop a living faith in Christ.

"A disciple is a follower," Msgr Henry said. "But do you believe in Him?"

He reminded the congregation that genuine belief involves imitating the life of Jesus and allowing Him to transform them into a new creation. God remains present and active, particularly in the Eucharist, sustaining His people each day with grace and blessing.

The candlelight procession proceeded smoothly as the faithful prayed and sang Ave Maria in honour of the Blessed Mother. Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam, Fr Philip Asirwalam and Dcn Albert Arputhan also joined the procession.

In his closing remarks, Msgr Stanislaus thanked Msgr Henry for guiding the community through the novena. Describing discipleship as a vocation and a journey with Jesus, he encouraged the faithful to continue walking with the Lord and to pray for the Church in Malaysia. **Bernard Anthony**



Msgr Henry (centre) and concelebrating priests during the Mass.

Holy Family of Nazareth: A model for families in the digital age

SEREMBAN: In a world of screens, notifications and constant connectivity, families were reminded that no technology can replace presence, communication and prayer.

Around 60 families from across Negeri Sembilan gathered at the Church of the Visitation for a district family formation programme themed *Holy Family of Nazareth: A Model for Families in the Digital Age.*

The gathering drew participants from the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Port Dickson; Church of St Theresa, Nilai; Church of St Aloysius, Mantin; Church of St John Marie Vianney, Tampin; and Church of the Visitation, Seremban.

The day opened with praise and worship, setting a joyful and prayerful tone as families reflected on their vocation and mission amid the rapidly changing realities of modern life.



Fr Christopher Soosaipillai is joined by the [illegible] during the Eucharistic Celebration.

In a video presentation, Cardinal Sebastian Francis of Penang and Bishop Bernard Paul of the Diocese of Malacca Johore reflected on the challenges and opportunities facing families in the digital age. Their sharing encouraged families to reflect on how technology and the digital environment have become an integral part of family life, while emphasising the importance of keeping Christ at the centre of the family.

Formation sessions were then conducted in English, Tamil and Mandarin by couples from the Family Life Ministry of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Drawing from their own experiences, the facilitators offered practical insights into navigating technology, social media and an increasingly digital lifestyle.

Participants were invited to examine how their digital habits affected communication and relationships at home. The sessions also explored practical ways to use technology wisely while protecting time for conversation, connection and shared faith.

As the formation drew to a close, families gathered for Eucharistic Adoration, placing their joys, struggles and hopes before the Lord. The quiet time of prayer affirmed that the strength of family life does not come from having a perfect home, but from continually returning to Christ.

The programme culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by Fr Christopher Soosaipillai, parish priest of the churches of St Aloysius, Mantin, and St Theresa, Nilai.

Concelebrating were Fr Xavier Andrew, parish priest of the Church of the Visitation; Fr Albet Arockiasamy; Fr Kenneth Gopal, OCD; and Fr Philip Tay, OCD.

The gathering affirmed that, even amid the pressures and distractions of the digital age, the family remains the first place where faith is lived, relationships are nurtured and Christ's love is encountered.

Inspired by the Holy Family of Nazareth, the families of Negeri Sembilan were encouraged to build homes rooted in faith, love, honest communication and prayer — and to become witnesses of the Gospel both online and offline. **Sabrina Smith**

Called to serve, formed to reveal Christ

Tianne Pereira

PETALING JAYA: What does it really mean to serve? Is it knowing where to stand, what to do, and when to move? Or is it something deeper, perhaps a response to a call that began long before we ever stepped into a ministry?

These were some of the questions that gently unfolded during the third session of the *Deepening our Liturgical Life* formation series organised by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission (ALC) of Kuala Lumpur, held on Saturday, September 19 at the Church of the Assumption.

As participants gathered for the third of this four-part journey, themed *Called to Serve,* the day became more than just a session on liturgical ministries. It became a reminder that behind every ministry is a person, called by God, formed by the Church and invited to serve His people.

Fr Leonard Lexson began by bringing everyone back to the most fundamental question: "Who are we before God?" Before we are lectors, altar servers, sacristans, extraordinary ministers or ministers in any other capacity, we are, first and foremost, people who have been called through our Baptism. Ministry is therefore not simply a task we volunteer for. It is a vocation, one that calls us to serve with humility, reverence, and prayer.

That foundation was built upon by Spencer Klumai of the ALC, who explored what it means to understand the different ministries within the celebration of the Eucharist. While each ministry has its own role, every minister shares one mission, and that is to serve the worship of God and the people of God.

From preparing before Mass, serving during the celebration, and carrying that responsibility beyond the final blessing, participants were reminded that good ministry requires both spiritual and practical preparation, as well as faithfulness to the Church's liturgical norms.

But perhaps the most beautiful reminder was that we do not serve alone. In his session, *Many Ministries, One Celebration,* Fr Leonard reflected on how the many different ministries come together as one body, serving one celebration. We may have different roles, but there is only one purpose — that through the Church's worship, Christ may be revealed. And when we serve, we are not merely serving at Mass. We are serving Christ by serving His people.

Sandra Ann, also from the ALC, reminded us that this call continues beyond the sanctuary and challenged participants to look at the person behind the ministry. *Growing as a Liturgical Minister* was a reminder that the holiness we bring to the altar cannot remain at the church doors. The way we speak, move, behave, and treat others outside church should also reflect the same reverence we bring into worship. She also emphasised that spiritual preparation, practical preparation, reverence



A participant sharing her thoughts on a question posed by the presenter.

in our gestures and speech, and a willingness to continue learning are all part of becoming the ministers God is calling us to be.

The session ended not simply with more teaching, but with an opportunity to put it into practice. Madonna Francis led a practical workshop using real-life situations, allowing participants to think, respond, discuss, and reflect on how they might handle different moments in ministry. There was room to laugh, learn, reconsider, and grow, because formation is, after all, a journey.

And perhaps that is what *Called to Serve* is really about. It is not about becoming perfect ministers. It is about becoming more faithful disciples who understand that every time we serve, we get another opportunity to point others to Christ.

One more chapter remains in this journey. The final session, *Celebrating the Seasons of Grace: The Liturgical Year and Calendar,* will take place in November. If you have been journeying with us, come and complete the journey. And if you have not yet joined us, perhaps this is your invitation. Because sometimes, the call to serve is already there. We simply need to pause, listen, and say "yes, Lord!"

Pilgrims walk in the light of faith and vocation

MELAKA: A delegation of 30 Catholics from several parishes in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur made a spiritual pilgrimage to the Sacred Heart Canossian Convent in Melaka, carrying with them a mission of prayer, solidarity and support for religious vocations.

The pilgrims, many of whom were visiting the convent for the first time, were warmly welcomed by Sr Evelyn Elyas, FdCC and Sr Clare Chin, FdCC.

Gathering in the Sacred Heart Chapel, the group began its visit with community prayer and reflection centred on the words of Isaiah 2:5: *Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

The reflection invited the pilgrims to turn away from darkness and allow the light of Christ to illuminate their hearts and minds. Having received that light, they were reminded, that Christians are called to carry it into the lives of others.

The pilgrims also reflected on the witness of the Canossian Sisters, who left behind lives of comfort to serve God and His people, particularly through the care and education of children.

The visit offered the group an opportunity to learn about the life, work and mission of the Sisters through a briefing by Sr Evelyn and a tour of the Canossian Heritage Gallery. It was also a time to pray for vocations to the religious life and to consider how families and parish communities can plant and nurture the seeds of vocation among young people.

Above all, the pilgrimage sought to strengthen ties with the Sisters and assure them of the love, prayers and support of the wider Catholic community. As a sign of solidarity with their mission, the group



Pilgrims praying at the Sacred Heart Canossian Convent.

presented the Sisters with a "Love Gift".

Sr Evelyn shared that only six Sisters are currently residing at the convent. She also traced the history and mission of the Canossians in Malaysia, beginning with their arrival in the region.

Their journey began in 1884, when the Bishop of Macau was asked to send Canossian Sisters to Singapore. Four Sisters later arrived in Melaka in May 1905 and established their first foundation at the Sacred Heart Canossian Convent in Banda Hilir. There, they cared for orphans and provided education for children from poor families.

That mission of faith and service continues today. The Sisters manage the Sacred Heart Kindergarten, teach Bible Knowledge and assist families in need.

Sr Evelyn urged the pilgrims not only to pray for religious vocations, but also to encourage young women in their families and communities to listen for God's call and consider dedicating their lives to serving Him and His people.

At the Canossian Heritage Gallery, Sr Evelyn guided the visitors through historical artefacts and displays tracing the mission from the arrival of the pioneer Sisters in 1905. The tour gave the pilgrims a deeper appreciation of the faith, courage and sacrifices that have sustained the Canossian mission in Malaysia for the past 121 years.

Today, the Canossian Daughters of Charity continue their presence and mission in Melaka, Kluang, Segamat, Jinjang and Sungai Siput.

The pilgrimage concluded with mutual expressions of gratitude. The visitors thanked the Sisters for their hospitality and faithful witness, while assuring them of their continued prayers and support.

They also prayed for God's blessings upon the community and for a favourable resolution to the ongoing court case concerning the convent's land.

The visit was ultimately a reminder that vocations are nurtured when people encounter lives of joyful and faithful service. As the pilgrims departed, the invitation of Isaiah remained with them: to continue walking in the light of the Lord — and to help others discover the path on which God may be calling them to serve. **Bernard Anthony**

Creation leads us back to the Creator

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 50 parishioners of the Church of St Francis of Assisi took part in a morning programme combining gentle movement, prayer, meditation and reflection on creation.

Organised by the parish Creation Justice ministry in collaboration with the Health and Wellness, Prayer and World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) ministries, the programme encouraged participants to slow down, reconnect with creation and reflect on the presence of God in its beauty and fragility.

Through prayer, praise songs and a joyful Canticle of the Sun dance, participants celebrated the beauty of creation and gave thanks to its Creator.

Plans for an outdoor appreciation of nature had to be moved indoors because of the haze. Yet the change itself became part of the morning's reflection. The haze served as a sobering reminder that creation is not merely something for us to admire or enjoy. It is a sacred gift entrusted to our care, and the Earth is our common home.

Through walking and sitting meditation, participants were encouraged to slow down, listen and become attentive to the presence of God within and around them. In a world filled with constant noise, movement and distraction, the stillness offered an opportunity to notice what is often overlooked — the rhythm of one's breathing, the gift of life and the quiet ways in which creation continually speaks of its Creator.

The morning also included fellowship, food, laughter and meaningful conversations. Participants later joined in another round of the lively Canticle of the Sun praise dance, celebrating the joy of belonging to one human family within God's creation.

The programme concluded with three minutes of silence before participants gathered in the chapel for Mass. In his reflection, Fr Paul Cheong, OFMCap spoke about the seed, the soil and humanity's responsibility towards creation.

His reflection left participants with a searching question: "What kind of soil are we?"

Perhaps the question goes deeper still: "What kind of soil are we creating for others — and for the generations who will inherit the Earth after us?"

Good soil does not exist for itself. It receives the seed, nourishes life and allows fruit to grow. In the same way, gratitude for creation must lead to responsibility. Prayer must shape the way we live, and praise must be transformed into care.

May we learn to receive creation with gratitude, protect it with responsibility and share its blessings with love. May our hearts become good soil, our lives bear good fruit and our praise become love in action. **Shivonne Prevena**



The Canticle of the Sun dance presentation.

CST: A practical guide to living the faith



Philip Packium

SEGAMAT: Faith cannot remain confined to prayer or private devotion; it must find expression in justice, compassion, respect for human dignity and care for creation. This was the central message of a Catholic Social Teaching (CST) session held at the Church of St Philip on Sunday, September 6.

Twenty parishioners took part in the session led by facilitator Martin Jalleh, who guided them through the fundamental principles of CST and their relevance to everyday Christian living.

Martin explained that CST is not an abstract intellectual discourse, but a living body of teaching rooted in Gospel values. Developed and articulated through Scripture, papal encyclicals and other Church documents, it helps Catholics understand how faith should shape their response to the realities of the world.

At the heart of CST, he said, is respect for God's creation and, above all, the inherent dignity of every human person. Its principles flow from the conviction that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and must therefore be treated with justice, compassion and respect.

Faith, then, is not merely about "me and my God". It also concerns our relationship with our neighbour and our responsibility towards the whole of creation. Genuine spirituality cannot be separated from how we treat the poor and vulnerable, respond to injustice, protect human dignity and care for our common home.

Two Scripture passages captured this call clearly:

"Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8

"Whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did to Me." — Matthew 25:40

Martin explained in clear and accessible terms how Catholic faith embraces every dimension of life. CST does not allow love to remain merely in words or good intentions; when understood and lived, it translates faith into visible and concrete action.

Embracing its principles can help Catholics develop a mature and integrated spirituality — one that connects prayer with service, worship with justice, and love of God with love of neighbour.

Participants found the session both refreshing and challenging, discovering that CST is not simply a collection of lofty ideals but a practical guide to faithful Christian living.

Summing up the heart of CST, Martin invited participants to see the splendour and struggles of creation through the eyes of Christ, judge with the wisdom and compassion of the Holy Spirit, and act in harmony with God's plan.

It is a simple process, but one that can transform faith from something merely professed into something courageously lived.

The path of the martyrs continues



PENANG: The courage of the martyrs remains a living call to self-renunciation, obedience and faithful discipleship, Cardinal Sebastian Francis told the College General community during its feast-day celebration.

The community commemorated Sts Jacques-Honoré Chastan and Laurent-Marie-Joseph Imbert, together with the 103 Korean Martyrs, at the Sacred Heart Chapel, College General Regional Major Seminary, on September 21.

Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang and President of College General, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. The Mass was concelebrated by Frs Ryan Innas Muthu, Surain Durai Raj, Cyril Mannayagam and Larry Tan SJ, together with Friar Cosmas Francis OFM, while Deacon Paul Kang assisted.

The celebration reflected College General's 2026 theme, *Walk Humbly, Celebrate Fraternity, Listen Deeply, Serve Wholeheartedly.* Discerned collectively by its formators and seminarians, the theme expresses their vision of becoming *A Joyful Community of Disciples Rooted in Christ.*

In his homily, Cardinal Sebastian drew attention to the theme's many verbs and dispositions, which challenge the community to translate words into concrete action.

Referring to experiences at College General and during the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026) in Sibu, particularly through Conversation in the Spirit, he highlighted the collective power of silence, words and actions prompted by the Holy Spirit — and the importance of celebrating what the Spirit brings forth through the community.

Read in the light of Wisdom 3:1–9, he said, these dimensions reveal a deep connection between the witness of the College General martyrs, the seminary's theme, the feast-day celebration and the Malaysian Church's continuing journey after MPC2026.

This connection, however, must take root in the soul and become visible through the quiet but real synodal conversion taking place within individuals and communities.

Drawing on Luke 9:23–26, Cardinal Sebastian identified three steps in this Spirit-led conversion: renouncing oneself, taking up one's cross and following Jesus.

He told the seminarians: "Renounce yourself from being the centre; carry your cross and follow Jesus."

The cardinal said Christians should fear only one thing: sinning against and disregarding the promptings of the Holy Spirit. His words carried both a warning against resisting the Spirit and an invitation to embrace intentional obedience and committed discipleship.

Concluding his homily, Cardinal Sebastian prayed that the Church in Malaysia and Asia would not become disobedient, isolated or left behind, but would faithfully follow where the Holy Spirit had already gone before it.

He encouraged those present to continue walking together as a synodal Church, united with the nine bishops of Malaysia and guided by the Holy Spirit. The congregation responded: "Amen, Amen, Amen! Maranatha, Maranatha, Maranatha!"

Cardinal Sebastian also recalled his former seminary mate, Fr Marcel Truong, a Cambodian alumnus who courageously returned to his homeland during the Khmer Rouge regime and subsequently disappeared. The cause for his canonisation, together with those of other heroic students, bears witness to College General's enduring missionary spirit and the cost of faithful discipleship.

The Diocese of Penang has also honoured Sts Chastan and Imbert through the church dedicated to them at Chai Leng Park, Prai, which was established in 1995.

College General rector Fr Ryan Innas Muthu thanked the formators, seminarians, lecturers, staff and all who contributed to the celebration and the formation of the seminary community. **Christopher Kushi**

CIC parish launches School of Faith

JOHOR BAHRU: Parishioners at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), now have access to a structured adult faith formation programme in four languages, following the launch of the School of Faith (SoF) in September 2026.

Organised by the parish's St Joseph's Catechetical Office, the programme is offered in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil, enabling parishioners from different language communities to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith.

The 90-minute sessions are held once a month, with every language group following the same format. Each session begins with a 20- to 30-minute instructional video produced by the Splendour Project, followed by personal reflection and small-group discussion.

This combination of systematic teaching, reflection and shared experience allows participants not only to learn what the Church teaches, but also to consider how that teaching can be lived in their homes, workplaces and communities.

The organisers stressed that sound adult formation is essential if the laity are to be equipped with the knowledge needed to understand, explain and live their faith. Catholics cannot depend solely on occasional or piecemeal formation that leaves them with only a basic understanding of Church teaching. A strong and missionary Church needs well-formed lay people who know their faith and are prepared to witness to it.

The first English-language session, held on September 12, drew more than 20 participants. They included young adults, parents of children attending catechism classes, senior parishioners and Catholics from other parishes in Johor Bahru. Sessions in the other three languages also commenced in September.

The response to the session was encouraging, with participants expressing a renewed desire to learn more about their faith. Many welcomed the opportunity to reflect with others and share their experiences, while parents and grandparents hoped to pass on what they learnt to younger members of their families.

Andrea Anne, a young adult from the Church of the Immaculate Conception, appreciated the personal reflection encouraged during the session.

"I especially liked how the session encouraged us to reflect more deeply on our personal faith journey and consider how we can continue growing closer to God," she said.

Violet Lim from the Church of St Joseph, Plentong, said she was eagerly looking forward to the coming sessions "to deepen my faith and live according to it".

In his exhortation, Deacon Sherman Kuek encouraged participants to persevere in faith formation so that they might come to love God more fully. He emphasised that faith and intellect cannot be separated: Catholics need to know God and encounter Him, to love Him.

Knowledge of the faith, therefore, is not an end in itself. It opens the way to a deeper relationship with Christ and equips believers to follow Him more faithfully. **Emmy Jong**

Letters to Editor

Generous heart of a senior citizen

Dear Editor,

A group of parishioners from the Church of the Holy Family in Ulu Tiram, Johor Bahru, visited the Church of St Francis Xavier (SFX), Petaling Jaya, in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur recently.

Our mission was to raise funds for our new church. The fundraising drive during the weekend Masses was successful beyond our expectations. We are especially grateful to SFX parish priest Fr Alvin Ng, the parish office staff and parishioners for their generosity, assistance and all the arrangements made for us.

Our team of seven members was there on August 22 and 23.

As we were preparing to return to Johor after the 5.30pm Sunday Mass, an anxious-looking elderly man approached us, eager to place a donation in the collection box before we left.

He reached into his trouser pocket, took out all the money he had with him — which consisted entirely of coins — and placed it in the box.

We were deeply touched by his generous heart and willingness to share what he had.

God measures our giving not by the size of the gift, but by the love and sacrifice behind it. This encounter taught us to receive every contribution with gratitude and a smile.

May God bless all those who contributed so generously towards the construction of our new church.

C.P Kurisinkal
Ulu Tiram, Johor

Send your letters to ▶
letterseditor@herald.com.my
The Editor, HERALD,
5 Jalan Robertson, 50150 KL
Please include your name and address. *Letters without name and address will not be entertained.*

From invitation to mission



Elvina Fernandez

KUALA LUMPUR: It began with a phone call — a simple invitation that carried the weight of history. I was invited to the Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026 as a delegate and member of the *HERALD* Malaysia reporting team. When the call ended, I wondered: "How did this happen? How and why me?"

I felt blessed that my editor had remembered me. It seemed like a summons to witness and contribute to the first gathering of its kind, where the Catholic Church in Malaysia would discern pastoral pathways for the future.

Held in Sibu, Sarawak, MPC2026 brought together bishops, clergy, religious and lay delegates from across the country. It focused on renewal in four areas: Church, Family, Society and Ecology — urgent realities calling us to live our faith in communion and mission.

I will not lie: when we completed our registration at the hotel and discovered that delegates were placed four in a room, I was taken aback. The room itself was a stark contrast to what I usually encounter on work trips. For a moment, I questioned my acceptance of this assignment. My face must have betrayed my thoughts, because the *HERALD* editor looked at me and asked gently, "Are you ok?" It was then that I told myself: this is what it means to serve. I needed to humble myself, to embrace discomfort as part of the journey. That moment became a quiet turning point, a reminder that service often begins with surrender.

Each room had only one key, so we went out and returned together. No one was left behind. We learned to wait for one another, walk side by side and share not only space but life — a reminder that the Church is built on communion. We journey together, never alone.

For the Opening Mass, we walked from the hotel to Sibu Gateway in a moving sign of unity among the Malaysian dioceses. Walking and praying together, we embodied synodality: faith lived not in isolation, but in communion across dioceses and cultures.

At Sibu Gateway, praise and worship was followed by a Liturgy of the Cross led by young people. Nine crosses from the nine dioceses came together in a powerful sign of unity. Watching them converge, I felt deeply blessed to belong to God's chosen people.

I had never imagined holding hands to pray the Our Father or celebrating the Eucharist in the heart of the city as daily life continued around us. Faith, I realised, is not confined within walls; it must be lived in the world.

Just before Mass began, the skies opened. Marilyn, Stephanie, my other roommates and I were blessed when a kind young girl offered us her umbrella — just enough to shelter our heads. The downpour carried us towards the altar beneath the dome, where we found shelter and a close place from which to celebrate as one family of faith.

There, hierarchy seemed to fall away, as though God were telling us that we were all equal. Looking up, I saw a beautiful reflection of the Mass on the dome. Goosebumps rose and silent tears of gratitude fell. It felt as though God had drawn us closer, reminding us that His providence often arrives through unexpected hands and sudden storms.

After Mass, we walked back to the hotel following the *Salib* procession, still in the rain yet united as one people. Jesus truly walks beside us on our earthly journey. Later, at the veneration of the Cross, each of us received a miniature of the nine crosses joined together.

As I stood in line, I prayed: "Here I am, Lord. Hear the prayers of my parish and beyond. Each hand that touched the cross carried its hopes and prayers; now I bring them before You." I felt blessed to witness such unity and faith.

On Day Two, I joined a Conversation in the Spirit on the Church's contribution to the country's wellbeing. My group included a priest, a deacon and lay people of different ages — a mix of voices that matter. I also interviewed delegates from different backgrounds and cultures. One hope ran through their responses: that the Church in Malaysia would be united as one.

By Day Three, our Conversation in the Spirit had deepened. As the note-taker, I watched the Holy Spirit gradually reveal what the Church needed to do. The answers converged, and I had the privilege of synthesising them into a collective vision.

The responses called the Church to be more present to families, move outwards into the community, collaborate with those beyond the Church and reach the marginalised more effectively. This spirit of communion and mission shaped the pastoral pathways for action discerned on the final day.

We returned to our parishes not with final answers, but with renewed commitment. MPC2026 was a seed planted in the Malaysian Church, meant to bear fruit in communities nationwide.

The bonds formed in prayer and dialogue spilled into everyday kindness. While exploring Sibu, people we had met offered me snacks and encouraged me to try them. We were no longer strangers, but one big family. I felt blessed to belong to this communion.

MPC2026 reminded me that God provides in abundance. The meals, hospitality and fellowship spoke of generosity, yet abundance carries responsibility. I could not ignore the contrast between our ecological discussions and practices. Ten-course banquets, sometimes with two duck dishes, led to waste, while plastic remained widely used despite our call to reduce it.

What we practise regarding ecology in our parishes must be magnified when the Malaysian Church gathers. If we speak of stewardship, our gatherings must embody it. Modest meals, less plastic and conscious choices can become powerful witnesses. Fewer dishes would not diminish hospitality; they would strengthen our integrity.

MPC2026 was more than a convention. It was synodality lived — walking, discerning and praying together. It was both a professional assignment and a personal pilgrimage. I saw the Malaysian Church at its most vibrant and vulnerable, striving to listen to the Spirit and to one another.

As I return to my parish and work, I know that the pathways discerned at MPC must now be walked in daily life. Unity, justice and care for creation are not slogans but commitments. I may not understand why I was chosen, but I trust that God has a plan for me — to be part of His Church as it moves forward. The God who provides in abundance will guide us if we remain faithful stewards of His gifts.

● ***Read more in our MPC2026 supplement***

Safeguarding: A Gospel duty to protect

JOHOR BAHRU: Safeguarding is not merely an administrative requirement or a means of protecting the Church's reputation. It is an essential ministry rooted in the Gospel and the God-given dignity of every person.

This message was at the heart of two formation sessions organised recently by the Malacca Johore Diocese Professional Standards Office (MJDPSO) and Caritas MJD under the theme *Guarding Dignity: Understanding Safeguarding, Rights and Response.*

Held at Pusat Kasih Caritas in Johor and the Good Shepherd Seminary in Melaka, the workshops brought together members of religious communities, lay leaders and volunteers to strengthen the Church's commitment to protecting minors and vulnerable persons.

Participants reflected on the scriptural foundations of safeguarding, the painful lessons exposed by abuse cases around the world and the reforms introduced by the Vatican. They were reminded that safeguarding is not about preserving an institution's image, but about protecting people, remaining faithful to Christ's mission and upholding the dignity of every person.

A central focus was the responsibility to report concerns. Facilitators described reporting as an act of discipleship and stewardship directed towards three essential goals: safety, truth and justice.

Safety: The Church's first question must be: "Is anyone unsafe?" Protective measures, including temporary removal from ministry, supervision or referral to the civil authorities, must prioritise safety rather than wait for absolute certainty.

Truth: Reporting allows concerns to be assessed fairly and objectively. Silence, denial and concealment do not serve the truth or protect the community.

Justice: Justice seeks to restore right relationships by treating everyone with dignity and fairness, responding compassionately to those harmed and ensuring that institutions learn from failures and improve their safeguarding practices.

Participants were given one clear instruction: "Your role is to listen, reassure, record and report — not to investigate or determine guilt."

The workshops also addressed Malaysia's legal requirements. Participants were informed that Section 19 of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 requires anyone with information about the commission or intended commission of an offence covered by the Act — or a scheduled offence involving a child victim — to report it to the officer in charge of the nearest police station. Failure to do so constitutes an offence.



A presentation on safeguarding principles and response practices at Pusat Kasih Caritas, Johor.

The Professional Standards Office will help ensure compliance by directing complainants to lodge police reports and notifying the relevant authorities when required.

Drawing on findings from inquiries in Ireland, Australia, France, Germany and the United States, speakers warned against placing institutional reputation above the protection of children and vulnerable persons. Experience has repeatedly shown that concealing the truth ultimately causes deeper harm to victims, communities and the institution itself.

Church leaders were therefore urged to choose transparency — acknowledging failures honestly, responding responsibly and taking concrete steps to prevent further harm.

Beyond legal and procedural requirements, the sessions examined the psychological effects of abuse, trauma-informed pastoral care and the Church's responsibilities under canon law. Through case studies and practical exercises, participants learnt how to receive disclosures safely, respect appropriate confidentiality, document concerns and support victim-survivors with compassion.

The workshops concluded with each participant signing the Caritas Malaysia Safeguarding Acknowledgement Form — affirming a shared responsibility to help make every Church environment safer, more accountable and worthy of trust.

For enquiries, contact Albert Tan at 016-849 2346. Details of future safeguarding programmes in the Diocese will be shared through Caritas MJD channels.

Vatican renews call for dialogue across faiths

VATICAN CITY: The Vatican has called for renewed dialogue among religions that resists hatred, protects religious freedom and leads to practical concern for the vulnerable.

In a note titled *A Journey of Hope*, released on September 16, three Vatican dicasteries review the achievements and challenges of the 60 years since *Nostra Aetate* opened a new chapter in the Church's relations with other religions. The document was prepared by the dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith, Promoting Christian Unity and Interreligious Dialogue, and approved by Pope Leo XIV.

The note gives particular attention to the relationship between Christians and Jews. It condemns antisemitism and acknowledges that conflicts in the Middle East have strained communication, while urging both communities to preserve the trust built through decades of dialogue.



Pope Leo XIV signs the Note 'A Journey of Peace' in the presence of the Cardinal Prefects of the Dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the Promotion of Christian Unity, and for Interreligious Dialogue. (Vatican Media)

It also points to friendships among religious leaders, joint social and educational projects, and the quieter witness of neighbours of different faiths living peacefully alongside one another. The Vatican welcomes greater awareness of Islamophobia and cautions against associating peaceful Muslim believers with acts of extremism.

Respect for religious freedom is essential to such relationships, the note says. It calls for that freedom to be upheld for people of every faith, including Christians in countries where they are a minority, and condemns persecution on religious grounds.

The document also says concern for the poor is a test of efforts to build fraternity. Dialogue must be reflected in how communities respond to people facing hardship, rather than remaining an exchange of words.

The Vatican acknowledges obstacles, including past wounds, prejudice, fundamentalism and fears that dialogue could weaken religious identity. It calls for better formation and for the Church to learn from initiatives already taking place locally.

Dialogue requires "humility, courage, and discernment", the note says. Catholics are urged to meet others with respect and openness while remaining clear about their own faith, working together where possible for peace and the common good. **Agencies**

Easter attack verdict brings relief, questions remain

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Catholic Church and families of those killed in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings have welcomed the conviction of 15 men, while urging investigators to continue their search for those who planned the attacks.

A three-judge High Court bench sentenced the men on September 22 to between 200 and 260 years of rigorous imprisonment each for offences linked to the coordinated suicide bombings. Nine other defendants were acquitted, and the court ordered the confiscation of the convicted men's assets. Early reports that all 15 received 220-year terms were later corrected.

The bombers struck three churches and three hotels on April 21, 2019, killing hundreds of people and injuring more than 500. Those who carried out the suicide attacks died in the explosions; the men convicted this week were prosecuted for offences including conspiracy and aiding the attackers.

Fr Jude Krishantha Fernando, director of mass communications for the Archdiocese of Colombo, said the judgment brought consolation to families who had waited seven years. He stressed, however, that the verdict should not end efforts to establish the full truth and identify any others responsible.

For Pradeep Regan, whose four-year-old daughter was killed, the convictions were a welcome start. He said families also wanted to know who had ordered the attacks. Survivor Teresa Fernando, who suffered head injuries, said she had come to court seeking justice and would accept its decision.

A separate investigation remains under way into allegations concerning former intelligence chief Suresh Sallay, who is in custody and denies involvement. In July, a former police chief and a former defence official were sentenced to death for failing to act on intelligence warnings before the bombings.

The latest verdict resolves a major prosecution arising from the attacks. For the Church and victims' families, it is also a step towards answering questions that remain seven years later. **ucanews.com**



Relatives of the deceased and survivors of the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings rally to oppose the bid to protect former intelligence chief Suresh Sallay, who is accused of directing the attacks, in Negombo, Sri Lanka, on June 11. (ucanews.com)

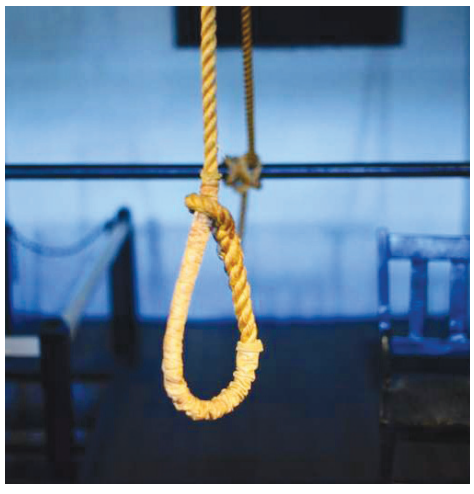
Korean Church seeks abolition of death penalty

SEOUL: Catholic leaders in South Korea have urged lawmakers to abolish the death penalty and develop sentences that protect the public while preserving human dignity and the possibility of rehabilitation.

The appeal came at a September 17 seminar at the National Assembly Members' Office Building in Seoul, organised by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea's death penalty abolition subcommittee and lawmaker Lee Hak-young. South Korea has carried out no executions since 1997, although capital punishment remains in law.

Former Mongolian president Tsakhia Elbegdorj, a member of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty, told the gathering that crime had fallen in Mongolia despite its abolition of capital punishment. Governments, he said, should address public fears through evidence, dialogue and justice reform.

The discussion also examined what should replace the death penalty. Kim Daegeun, a researcher at the Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice, warned that life imprisonment without parole could raise constitutional concerns by ruling out any



future review or reintegration. He proposed retaining existing life sentences or allowing parole review after a minimum term.

Lawyer Choi Sae-yan said legislation appeared unlikely under current political conditions and suggested that a Constitutional Court ruling could offer a path towards abolition. She also called for a gradual approach if agreement on parole-eligible life sentences proved difficult.

Bishop Simon Kim Joo-young, chairman of the bishops' Justice and Peace Committee, said the campaign should unite people across religious lines in respect for human rights. He expressed hope that a shared commitment would bring South Korea closer to abolishing capital punishment. **ucanews.com**

Jesuit safari brings ecology to parish

SEMARANG: At Girisonta Parish, children learnt about caring for creation by planting vegetables they could take home and tend themselves.

More than 100 children from parish faith formation, including pupils from Kanisius Elementary School, joined the Ecological Safari on September 20. Guided by the Jesuit-run Taman Tani Agricultural Training Centre (KPTT) in Salatiga, they explored different ways to grow plants before planting eggplants, chillies and mustard greens.

KPTT director Bro Antonius Dieng Karnedi SJ said taking the plants home gave children an opportunity to continue what they had begun at the parish. Caring for something living, he explained, helps make concern for the environment part of everyday life.

Parents and other adults joined an urban farming workshop, learning how to grow food in small spaces using containers, vertical gardens and other methods. The sessions also covered composting and the use of organic waste.

The programme was part of KPTT's 61st anniversary activities under the theme C*alled to Take Root, Sent to Care*. A Mass invited participants to reflect on their responsibility for creation in the light of *Laudato Si'*. KPTT brought the activities to the parish so families who could not travel to its centre could share in its practical ecological education.

After earlier visiting Semarang Indah Parish, the Ecological Safari is due to continue at other parishes in October. At Girisonta, its lessons will continue in the homes where children care for the plants they helped to grow. **RVA**





Reconfiguring our way of being Church

"I have imposed my own ideas and plans on my people.
Am I ready to let go, to die, to let the Holy Spirit lead?
I have failed to hear the cry of the family; I have failed to hear the cry of the Church; I have failed to hear the cry of society; I have failed to hear the cry of the ecology.
[We] need to move from ego [self-centred] to eco – a relational spirituality with all."

Rarely in Catholic life do we hear a shepherd publicly examine his leadership with such honesty. Yet at the Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) in Sibu, one bishop offered this searching confession, while every bishop present spoke candidly about the conversion required of the Malaysian Church.

Together, their reflections revealed a strong call from the Holy Spirit to reconfigure our relationships, processes and structures so that the Church becomes increasingly oriented towards communion and mission.

The shepherds' words

Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibu called everyone to repentance and proclaimed a year of *metanoia* — a profound change of mindset, attitude and direction that enables us to hear others and grow into a relational spirituality. As the Synod Final Document reminds us, "salvation is inherently relational" (FD 154).

Archbishop Julian Leow of Kuala Lumpur asked some simple questions: Are we united? Do we see ourselves as part of the Body of Christ? Am I standing outside looking in? What is the most important piece of the puzzle? … the missing piece! He stressed that the Church must walk with families and serve as a moral compass in society.

Archbishop John Wong of Kota Kinabalu urged the assembly to shine as one Church in Malaysia and make a meaningful impact on the nation.

Bishop Julius Gitom of Sandakan asked whether the baptised are truly disciples of Christ. Like the Samaritan woman at the well, we become disciples by encountering Christ, allowing Him to know us and recognising Him in those in need (cf. FD 142).

Bishop Richard Ng of Miri ignited the hall with his call to go out into the deep, to 'cast the net' and not remain at the fringes. Mission begins with personal conversion, *metanoia* … discipleship. He also urged young Catholics to enter ethical politics and regard public service as a vocation inspired by the Gospel (FD 58).

Bishop Bernard Paul of Malacca Johore warned the Church to be ready for the wilderness rather than seek instant gratification. He described Mission as Evangelisation, Dialogue (Bridge-Building) and Social Mission or Integral Human Development, translating faith into action with BECs and parishes becoming frontliners.

Representing Keningau, Msgr Gilbert Lasius recalled the cherished words of Bishop Cornelius Piong, who was unable to attend: *sikap ambil peduli* — a caring attitude. It must shape relationships throughout the Church, extend to wider society and embrace care for creation.

Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, spoke of his amazement at the power of the Holy Spirit in the assembly's collective silence, words, stories and dreams. The Spirit, he reminded us, is the animating soul of the Church.

As President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malaysia, Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching recalled the significance of 1976: *Aggiornamento* in Peninsular Malaysia and the emergence of local dioceses and episcopal leadership in Sabah and Sarawak. Fifty years later, 2026 carries jubilee significance for Malaysian Catholics.

He highlighted signs of visible unity: a national seminary formation journey, with the Initiation Year in Sabah and Penang, philosophy in Penang and theology in Kuching; religious serving across dioceses; national youth and campus structures; and the *Perjalanan Salib* through *kampungs,* BECs, parishes and dioceses.

He then summed up all the reflections of his fellow bishops and pointed to the future: the MPC, he said, enables us to build a truly Malaysian Church. We have seen the horizon of what the Church can be … like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we carry our wounds and pain, yet discover the Risen Lord meeting us along the way.

Archbishop Emeritus John Ha of Kuching grounded the assembly with a succinct reminder: diversity, as a nation and a Church, is what we have inherited; unity is what we must build.

Like beads of a rosary, these words of our shepherds invite us to contemplate the Church we are called to become: a Church of personal conversion and discipleship; a Church that practises *ambil peduli,* puts out into the deep, builds unity, shines, lives its mission and serves as a moral compass.

The significance of MPC

The significance of the convention lies in what the Lord is already doing among us. Through collective discernment, the assembly helped us recognise the words and actions of the Risen Lord.

Psalm 104:5 proclaims: "You set the earth on its foundations." The God who created the universe is laying foundations for the renewal of His Church. Our task is not to control that renewal, but to discern, cooperate and walk together, guided by the Spirit.

The MPC Working Committee will draw together the insights from the small-group Conversations in the Spirit. These express a contextual theology: the Spirit speaking through the prayer, faith and lived experiences of the baptised, where faith encounters reality.

Cardinal Sebastian summarised this call as conversion in three dimensions: relationships, processes and structures.

Conversion in relationships requires new attitudes, authentic listening and genuine care. Conversion in processes calls us to encounter people, prioritise the pastoral care of persons, families and communities at the margins, and learn from realities on the ground before turning to projects or rules. Conversion in structures means ensuring that structures serve life, relationships and mission. When they fail to do so, they can become "structures of sin" (FD 53).

These are foundations for the synodal Church we are called to continue building among ourselves and for all the people of Malaysia.



Delegates listening attentively to the Bishops' message. (ArchKK pic)

A new style of leadership

One pastoral principle emerges clearly: when leaders — lay, religious, priests or bishops — remain open, encourage communication and create genuine space for others, participation and ownership grow.

Synodality therefore depends not only on canon law or local culture, but greatly on the style of leadership practised at every level of the Church. Structures matter, but the spirit in which we lead, listen and relate determines whether those structures become life-giving.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, religious Sisters and young people responded creatively through online Bible study and prayer, mobile clinics, ecological farming and support for vulnerable young people. Such initiatives arose from prayerful attentiveness to the signs of the times. Leadership must recognise and nurture this "missionary creativity" (FD 111), not control every outcome.

Bishop Francisco Claver, who served Indigenous and rural communities in the southern Philippines, identified participation as a key word of the Second Vatican Council. Genuine change requires people's ownership. Just as the Sabbath was made for the human person (cf. Mark 2:27), ecclesial structures exist to serve life, faith and mission.

God is building His house

The MPC sharings and interviews revealed how God is acting at the peripheries and laying foundations for the renewal of the Malaysian Church.

At the recent 12th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) in Jakarta, the bishops addressed the polarisation and ethno-religious nationalism causing suffering among minorities across Asia. Such challenges make the renewal of our way of being Church even more urgent.

Reconfiguring our way of being Church does not mean merely rearranging the furniture. It requires conversion: dismantling barriers, simplifying structures and creating space for one another and for the gifts of every baptised person. The Church must be flexible enough to become a *gereja bergerak* — a Church on the move — wherever and whenever mission calls.

This renewal requires "authentic reciprocity" (FD 117, 121): an exchange of gifts among persons, vocations, communities and local Churches, recognising that our vocations and mission are interconnected.

The Spirit gives every baptised person gifts for mission and the flourishing of both the Christian community and society, not for struggles over power (FD 57, 58). Every vocation matters — laity, religious, deacons, priests and bishops. No one walks alone.

For this renewal to take root, formation must permeate the entire Church — among laity, clergy, and religious — inclusive of the MPC assembly's call to review seminary formation (cf. FD 147–148). The discernment also underscored the need for greater transparency from Church leadership, including parish councils. At its heart lies the evangelical truth: we are accountable to one another. As the Synod Final Document reminds us, accountability to the community for one's ministry belongs to the very tradition of the Apostolic Church (FD 92, 95).

Psalm 127:1 reminds us: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." The vitality of the assembly and the signs before us give reason for hope: the Lord is indeed building His house. May we have the faith, courage and humility to build together with our brothers and sisters and with all Malaysians of goodwill. **Dr Charles Bertille**

Dr Charles has served in various missions for over 30 years. He has studied management and theology, specialising in synodality, and lives in Seremban with his wife and mother.



Towards a Synodal Church in Malaysia (2026–2036)

Ten insights for our way forward

Drawing on Vatican II, Aggiornamento 1976, the Asian Church's pastoral journey and the Synod on Synodality, **Bro Anthony Rogers FSC** *offers ten insights to guide the Church in Malaysia over the next decade. This edited reflection highlights his call for spiritual renewal, communion, solidarity and concrete pastoral action.*

The Church in Malaysia cannot discern its future without remembering the journey that brought it here — its moments of grace and renewal, as well as its struggles and unhealed wounds.

Remembering is not an exercise in nostalgia. The lessons of the past can become guideposts as we ask what kind of Church we are called to be from 2026 to 2036.

These ten insights draw upon our common history and identify foundations for a synodal, missionary and distinctly Malaysian Church.

1. Vatican II remains our foundation

The Second Vatican Council called the Church to recognise the joys and hopes, grief and anguish of the human family as its own.

Gaudium et Spes invited Catholics to read the signs of the times, while *Lumen Gentium* deepened the Church's understanding of itself as the People of God.

The Council showed that the Church cannot understand its mission apart from the world it is called to serve. By recognising the forces shaping people's lives, it can respond faithfully to its mission of proclaiming the Gospel and building God's Kingdom.

2. *Aggiornamento* 1976 gave Vatican II local expression

Aggiornamento 1976 was the Church in Peninsular Malaysia's prophetic response to Vatican II. It sought to renew the local Church while strengthening its communion with the universal Church.

Its priorities were the development of Basic Ecclesial Communities, unity, formation, integral human development and interreligious dialogue.

Five decades later, its vision remains relevant. It reminds us that the Church is called to journey not only with its own members, but also with the people of Malaysia.

3. Primacy, collegiality and synodality belong together

The renewal begun by Vatican II has been carried forward through the Synod on Synodality. This journey brings together three dimensions: the primacy of the Pope, the collegiality of the bishops and the synodality of the People of God.

The Gospel is universal, but it must take root in each local Church. Bishops sustain communion with one another and the Pope, while synodality enables all the baptised to participate in the Church's life and mission.

In Malaysia, this means respecting the distinct experiences of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak while journeying as one Church.



4. Renewing the world begins with renewing the Church

Injustice, poverty, violence, corruption, consumerism and greed continue to shape society and distort the human heart. Christians are called to recognise these realities through the wisdom of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

Transformation, however, must begin within the Church. Structures and institutions may require renewal, but so do the hearts and minds of the faithful.

Unless synodality is rooted in conversion and the love revealed by Jesus, it will remain an appealing idea rather than a lived reality.

5. Asia offers a new way of being Church

The Malaysian Church belongs to the wider Church in Asia, whose peoples share histories of colonialism, independence, cultural diversity and religious plurality.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) has promoted "A New Way of Being Church in Asia" — a Church that reveals the face of Jesus through both its words and the witness of its members.

This approach can be expressed through **Dialogue, Discernment and Deeds**. Dialogue becomes a spirituality of listening, discernment forms the community, and deeds transform faith into mission for the peoples of Asia.

6. Contemplation must lead to compassion and courage

Synodality begins by contemplating the face of Jesus and rediscovering His heart. This encounter should awaken compassion towards those who suffer.

Like the Good Samaritan, the Church must notice those left wounded, draw near and respond. Compassion must then lead to the courage to reject indifference, challenge injustice and speak Gospel truth to the powerful.

The path also leads to the Cross, where Christians learn to die to selfishness, racism, narrow ethnic loyalties and extreme nationalism. Contemplation, compassion and courage must finally move us to **See, Judge and Act.**

7. Synodality must grow into human solidarity

We are the People of God, but we journey alongside God's people of every faith and culture. Communion within the Church must lead us into solidarity with the whole human family.

A synodal Church cannot turn inward while society remains divided by race, ethnicity, religion, inequality and individualism.

Learning to listen, discern and walk together within the Church should prepare us to accompany others beyond its boundaries, seeking truth, justice and peace with all people of goodwill.

8. Faith must be visible in life and society

The Church must close the gap between what it proclaims and how its members live. Faith should be reflected in how we treat others and respond to society's needs.

As salt and light, Christians are called to touch hearts and help transform structures that diminish human dignity. Faith must inspire good governance, just economic policies, ethical and cultural values, and care for creation.

Truth cannot remain confined to Church documents or public statements. Lived with love, it must shape our choices, institutions and relationships.

9. Transformation unfolds in God's time

The growth of God's Kingdom begins with inner renewal as we pray: "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done."

The Kingdom takes root within individuals and becomes visible in communities shaped by faith, love and service.

Building a synodal Church, therefore, requires patience and perseverance. Deep transformation cannot be achieved through a single convention, policy or programme. Yet patience must not become passivity. Each act of conversion, communion and service helps make the promise of a new heaven and a new earth present among us.

10. A concrete ten-year pastoral plan is needed

Vatican II, *Aggiornamento* 1976 and the Synod on Synodality should provide the foundation for the Malaysian Church's pastoral plans from 2026 to 2036.

A task force or commission could translate discernment into concrete short-, medium- and long-term plans. Priorities should include families, Basic Ecclesial Communities, parishes and the formation of laypeople to live their Christian vocation in society.

Bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders should also strengthen pastoral care for older persons, children, young people, migrants, refugees, the poor and those on the margins.

National Church bodies must develop stronger networks with one another and with Malaysian society, regularly reviewing their efforts and responding to new realities, including rapid technological change and artificial intelligence.

The work begins now

These insights do not offer a finished blueprint. They provide a foundation for further discernment and a call to move renewal into action.

Particular attention should be given to forming families and laypeople for their mission in an increasingly complex world. Communion, participation and mission cannot remain appealing words. They must influence how decisions are made, responsibilities are shared, communities are formed and vulnerable people are accompanied.

The Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 must be understood as part of a continuing journey. Its discernment will bear fruit only if bishops, priests, religious and laity remain committed to listening, discerning and acting together.

Progress will not be measured solely by plans produced or programmes organised. It will be revealed in whether the Church increasingly reflects the face of Jesus: prayerful in discernment, compassionate towards those who suffer, courageous before injustice and willing to walk with all people.

A new way of being Church in Malaysia is possible. The journey will take time, but it advances through every person and community willing to listen to the Spirit and live the faith with joy and hope.

Brother Anthony Rogers FSC *is a Malaysian La Salle Brother who has dedicated decades to Gospel-driven socioeconomic justice and education. As Director of Malaysia's National Office for Human Development and Executive Secretary of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Office for Human Development, he championed pastoral care for migrants, refugees, and the poor. A former Vatican consultor, his fearless witness to Catholic Social Teaching includes detention during 'Operation Lalang'.*

Miri welcomes its first Berawan priest



MIRI: As Malaysians celebrated a nation formed in diversity, the Diocese of Miri marked Malaysia Day with a grace-filled celebration of vocation, unity and hope — the priestly ordination of Deacon Joel Rut Markus, the first priest from the Berawan community.

More than 3,000 faithful gathered at the Church of St Dominic and the Rosary in Taman Tunku, Miri, with many arriving as early as 8.00am to witness and give thanks for this historic moment.



Fr Joel, the son of Markus Abdon Ajang and Lydia Anyi Ding of Long Jegan, Tinjar, Baram, completed four years of formation at College General, Penang, followed by another four and a half years at St Peter's College, Kuching. He was ordained a deacon on December 27, 2025, at the Church of the Holy Family, Lapok — the final stage of preparation before his ordination to the priesthood.

In his thanksgiving address, Fr Joel traced his vocation to a moment in the same church 10 years earlier. Sitting among the congregation, he listened as Fr Guido Gockel, then the parish rector and a familiar figure in the community, preached in Iban.

The young Joel was struck by the effort of a Dutch missionary who had learnt the local language so that he could proclaim the Gospel to the people in words familiar to them. It prompted him to reflect on the scarcity of local vocations and to ask who would continue bringing Christ to the people through their own language and culture.

Then, a simple but searching question took root in his heart: "Why not you? Why not me?"

What began as a quiet question gradually became a call he could no longer ignore. Fr Joel eventually offered his "yes" to God — a response that required years of prayer, discernment, formation and perseverance, and ultimately brought him to the altar as a priest.

His personal "yes" became an invitation to others during the Ordination Mass. Bishop Richard Ng of Miri encouraged more young men to open their hearts to the possibility of a priestly vocation.

He reminded the congregation that the priesthood demands patience, perseverance and commitment, with formation taking at least 10 years. Pointing to Fr Joel's journey, the bishop urged young men not to postpone their discernment, as the Diocese of Miri continues to need more priests to serve its people.

Following the Mass, the celebration continued in the church hall, where the clergy, Fr Joel's family, parishioners and friends shared a fellowship lunch with the newly ordained priest. The simple gathering became an extension of the Eucharistic joy — a community giving thanks for one of its own, now called to serve the wider Church.

Fr Joel will begin his priestly ministry at the Church of the Holy Family, Lapok, serving the faithful and proclaiming Christ to the community where he was ordained a deacon.

Celebrated on Malaysia Day, his ordination carried a message that reached beyond one parish or community. In a nation of many peoples, languages and cultures, the Gospel takes deeper root when local sons and daughters courageously respond to God's call and serve among their own people.

The Berawan community celebrates its first priest, while the Diocese of Miri receives a new shepherd. Above all, Fr Joel's journey bears witness to what can unfold when a question planted in the heart is met with trust, courage and a generous "yes".

May his priestly ministry bear abundant fruit, and may his example inspire more young men to pause, listen and ask: "Why not me?"

"You did not choose Me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit." — John 15:16

Deo gratias. Ad multos annos, Fr Joel! **Caroline Sarah Petrus, Diocese of Miri Social Communication Ministry**

Love takes shape in every bar

To most people, a bar of soap is an ordinary household item. But when it is carefully moulded, packed and sent to someone behind prison walls, it becomes something more: a reminder of dignity, compassion and hope.

Nestled in the foothills of Air Itam, Penang, the Church of the Risen Christ serves parishioners from Paya Terubong, Air Itam and the growing township of Farlim. Within this small, close-knit parish is a dedicated soap-moulding team whose simple ministry has touched lives well beyond the parish grounds.

The initiative began in 2022 when a parishioner involved in Prison Ministry organised a workshop to produce antibacterial soap for prisoners in the Diocese of Penang. After learning the process from Margaret Chow and her friends at the nearby Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, the team went on to conduct more than 10 workshops.

The ministry has since brought together members of the Hospitality Ministry, Bahasa Malaysia Apostolate, Parish BECCOT, Seniors Ministry and CARITAS Risen Christ. The team also moulds soap for detainees at Immigration Detention Centres, with Caritas Penang and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) helping to deliver the finished bars. Other parishes and university student groups have also invited the team to guide them in this corporal work of mercy.

Behind every workshop are volunteers willing to surrender a weekend or public holiday to mould and pack the soap. Some serve as entire families, turning the work into an experience of faith shared across generations. The ministry is also sustained by generous sponsors who provide soap base, equipment, raw materials and meals for the volunteers.

For those involved, the workshops are not merely about producing soap. They are opportunities for fellowship, prayer and encounter — occasions when faith takes visible form through hands willing to serve.

Where faith meets action

For Ivor Choo, the ministry has become part of his family's spiritual journey.

"For the past several years, some of our weekends have followed a unique and deeply fulfilling routine: gathering around tables, weighing and measuring raw materials, and moulding soap. What began as a simple desire to give back has become a cornerstone of our family's faith journey.

"Today, it is a legacy of love shared by three generations — my dad, my wife, our two sons and me. When we joined the team, we were inspired by the commitment of those who had been serving long before us. Each person contributes different gifts, but we are united by one compassionate purpose: to remind those who are incarcerated that they are neither forgotten nor unloved by God.



"For our family, this is far more than a charitable activity; it is where faith meets action. Watching my dad work alongside my sons, while my wife carefully prepares the materials, is deeply moving. The physical act of moulding soap has also become a spiritual metaphor for us. As we shape each bar, we reflect on how patiently God moulds us, smoothing our rough edges and continually offering us the grace of renewal.

"This ministry has taught our sons the meaning of stewardship and empathy. It has shown them that even the smallest act of service can carry Christ's love to another person.

"To the outside world, soap may appear mundane. To a prisoner, however, a handmade bar can represent care, hygiene and respect for their God-given dignity. Knowing that something made by our hands may bring comfort to a person in a dark place fills us with gratitude.

"Looking back, we realise that we have received far more than we have given. The ministry has strengthened us as a family, grounded our prayers and connected us with a beautiful community of volunteers. We pray that every bar of soap will carry a message of hope, healing and restoration to the person who receives it."

A gift of love and prayer

Melissa A, who serves alongside her father, also sees every bar of soap as a personal message to its recipient.

"My dad and I have been part of the soap-moulding team for the past few years. Although we are unable to visit the prisoners, every piece of soap is a gift of love from us to them.

"We want them to know that they have not been forgotten and that there are people beyond the prison walls who hold them in their thoughts and prayers. Each bar carries our love, compassion and hope, together with a prayer for the person who will receive it.

"Dad and I are grateful that God has given us this opportunity to serve while enjoying the teamwork and fellowship that make the experience so rewarding."

Through God's grace and the generosity of many hands, the Risen Christ soap-moulding team has grown steadily, with its own equipment, experienced volunteers and faithful sponsors. The parish is also grateful for the encouragement of its parish priest, Friar Crispus Mosinoh, OFM, and assistant priest, Friar Cosmas Francis, OFM.

In these volunteers' hands, soap becomes much more than a means of cleansing. Each bar carries a quiet assurance across walls they may never personally enter. Every human life possesses dignity, every person remains a child of God, and no one should ever feel forgotten. **Stephanie Cheong**

Time, season, mission



Word in Progress

Karen-Michaela Tan

We live in unprecedented times. While the science fiction prediction of flying cars by 2020 was not realised (thankfully, in my opinion, as we have enough nuts behind steering wheels, and can do without a new breed of kamikaze flyboys), the way we do things have changed exponentially.

Gone is the one-employer-for-life mindset of my parents, who spent 35 years as bankers, rising from clerks to department heads. Today, remaining in a position for more than three years can earn approving looks. Permanent jobs are dwindling, the gig economy is expanding, and Gen Xers caught between the two eras are often left baffled and frustrated.

Enter yours truly, 52, degreed, skilled and just barely keeping up on LinkedIn. Business owner of a boutique writing and creative agency for 24 years, I was politely given notice by my client of three years, a leading luxury hospitality business. An independent contractor, I had no safety net except what I had artfully woven for my own decades ago when I began the business, fuelled by the desire to treat people who worked under me way better than was the norm in the corporate world. In my years as a business owner, no invoice went over 14 days, because I knew my writers and designers had bills to pay.

A final pay cheque in July and a featureless landscape loomed in front. New frontiers at 20 are very different from the uncharted territory of ill-fitting retirement, and I spent a month ruminating my path, and making a nice dent in my altar chair.

With four books to my credit, countless bylines and name below the designation of Editor in many glory boxes, I allowed myself to accept the truth: I didn't mind not writing or editing professionally again. I had an active posting life on (archaic) Facebook, I gave academic friends' manuscripts a final read, and was acidic about corporate marketing typos, so I was engaging in my craft.

So, what to do? I decided to see if, for once in my life, I could manage not to problem solve. I signed up for a training course with The Befrienders, a listening telephone service who work to help prevent suicide and provide a non-judgmental ear to people who needed to get things off their chests.

The screening and training process of this non-profit organisation surpasses any corporate training I have experienced. Individuals first attend a talk about what the service does and stands for. Those with real interest are asked to submit an application to train. An interview is conducted to ascertain a possible fit.

I was one of 18 who made the first selection. My group of seven formed the kind of friendship that can only be made in intense situations. And training was intense. At the end of an eight-week training period, a final interview for selection. I flunked. I wasn't surprised.

My personality powered my career. I am intuitive, incisive, and a problem-solver to boot. I'm a fixer. And no matter how hard I tried, I always wanted to know who, what, where, when and how. Knowledge is power, research informs correct action, and my strategic training just wouldn't shut up. The amazing people who (wo)man the phones at The Befrienders are far better at turning off this side of their personalities than I was.

Rejection, no matter how gentle and astute, stinks. And when it comes on the heels of a big life change like the end of a career, it's truly an unrecommended two-fer. Yet, the experience was something I wouldn't trade for the world. Smack bang in middle age I saw things about myself I didn't like. I was told things that further cemented what I felt about the positives of my personality, and I had the awakening that normally only comes with years of therapy.

I didn't make the cut, but I came out knowing more about myself, and vowing to work on aspects that would run contrary to interactions with people I am trying to help.

After the selection, my course mates opened a chat group. Everyone in it had been accepted and were going onto further observation. Mindful of The Befrienders charter of confidentiality (I resonated with that as a Catholic who respects the seal of the confessional), I told the four that perhaps it was best I not be included. All of them immediately said that it was I who had made the cohort feel like a family, and it was my invitation to fellowship after training that allowed them to feel safe with voicing their fears and doubts. I had become their Befriender. It's been two months since my strike-out, but I'm still coordinating the group and checking in on them.

Last week, I realised I had not seen a friend online in weeks. Checking in on them, I was told they had been going through a tumultuous time. That person adores a particular casserole I make, and I used delivering a freshly baked one to their house as a ploy to make sure they were alright. The disarray of the home, and the person's gauntness showed they were not okay. Without the training I underwent at The Befrienders, I would have just tutted at them for working too hard and not eating properly, and left. It is, after all, the Asian thing to do.

However, something in me was prompted, and I stayed on the pretext of sharing the casserole with the person because "I actually swapped Parmesan with Gruyère and want to know if it works better?"

Speaking to my friend about a bad business setback they were going through, I was compelled to ask them if they were feeling at the end of their rope. What resulted was a tearful confession that they were planning to commit suicide that very night.

I sat with my friend for 12 hours. Tears, screams, wails, crying until they passed out from emotional exhaustion. I stayed. When they woke, they ate my cold casserole. We flushed the pills carefully collected over three months down the toilet.

If I hadn't learnt to ask someone if they were feeling suicidal at The Befrienders training, I would have lost a friend. This experience underscores what Jeremiah 29:11 says: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

This, hand in hand with Ecclesiastes "to everything there is a season" underscores God's work in my life. I can start, but it is God who will finish my work, and sometimes, from my gift of time, He will show me my mission. And I know God doesn't impose a retirement age on His people when there is still much good work to be done.

Karen *is a poet, writer and editor who seeks out God's presence in the human condition and looks for ways to put the Word of God into real action.*

Guardians of heritage



Turun Padang

Christopher Kushi

Heritage work in the Diocese of Penang is never merely administrative; it is a quiet ministry of safeguarding the places, stories, and sacrifices that have shaped the Catholic presence in the diocese for more than 240 years. The Penang Diocese Catholic Heritage Conservation Committee (PDCHCC) serves as the diocese's custodian of heritage, bridging the past entrusted to us, the conservation needs of the present, and the responsibility of preserving this legacy for future generations. Everything undertaken for the Church carries a spiritual dimension, expressed through works and faith.

In 2019, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, reconstituted the former Penang Catholic Heritage Preservation Committee (David Choo - Secretary) into the more defined Penang Diocese Catholic Heritage Conservation Committee (Christopher Kushi - Secretary). There is no renovation, only restoration. Architect Andrew Khoo ensures any restoration follows heritage guidelines. With numerous heritage sites across the diocese entrusted to its care, the PDCHCC continues to strengthen the diocese's heritage identity, ensuring that Penang's Catholic story remains visible and conserved.

The Church of the Assumption, founded in 1786 and recognised as a Category 1 Heritage Building, is located within George Town's UNESCO World Heritage zone. It stands as both an architectural landmark and a sanctuary that has accompanied Penang's Eurasian Catholic community for generations. Even the surrounding roads, Church Street and Bishop Street, reflect this heritage, while Eurasian family names such as Augustin, Robless, Rozario, Cornelius, Gregory, Rozells, Gasper, Andrews, and many others echo the community's early contributions. A recent major undertaking is the commissioning of a book project entitled *Penang's Oldest Catholic Church – Church of the Assumption 240th Anniversary* (1786–2026), documenting the legacy of Penang's oldest Catholic church and preserving its story for future generations.

Pulau Jerejak is an island layered with histories of leper asylum, quarantine station, penal colony, and faith. The Chapel of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, built in 1890 by Fr Emile Mariette, MEP, remains one of the diocese's most historically significant structures. Standing for 136 years on land adjoining the former Leprosy Hospital, the chapel bears witness to a sacred chapter of Penang's Catholic heritage. In 1932, a Chinese catechist was stationed on the island to serve 80 Catholic patients under the supervision of the Vicarage of the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, George Town. On March 1, 2026, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, together with clergy and members of the PDCHCC, celebrated a memorial Mass at the Chapel, rekindling memories of the Masses once offered there. The parish of the Divine Mercy in Sg Ara, including Fr Michael Raymond OFMCap, Sylvester Siva, Jude Narayanan, (and remembering the late Anthony Andrews), has been entrusted with safeguarding this legacy.

In Perak, the Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of Malayan World War II heroine Sybil Kathigasu née Daly runs in tandem with efforts to protect and preserve her heritage legacy. Sybil Kathigasu stands as one of Malaysia's most compelling Catholic heroines and, by every measure, a woman of deep conviction. Guided by her Catholic faith, she endured suffering with remarkable courage. Her story, *No Dram of Mercy,* is more than a memoir; it is a sacred testimony to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of cruelty and war. Through her medical service to Malayan resistance fighters during the Japanese Occupation and her steadfast witness to holy virtues, she has become a lasting symbol of moral courage.

The gothic heritage ruins of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pagar Tras, Bukit Mertajam, also called 'Notre Dame in the Jungle', nestled along the Seraya Forest Reserve, stand as a living testament to the Catholic history of Seberang Perai, Penang. Built in 1875 by the French missionaries with the support of the immigrant Hakka Catholic community, it served for decades as a centre of worship, education, and community life.

Today, its ruins and adjoining cemetery remain powerful symbols of faith. Heritage preservation requires active engagement with state authorities, with Msgr Henry Rajoo and Fr Desmond Jansen ensuring the continued conservation of the structure. Prof Emeritus Dr Stephen Chia, Francis Chen, and Clement Liang, have also contributed to this effort through their book, '*History and Heritage of Pagar Tras*'.

The old Roman Catholic Cemetery located along Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah in George Town is a historic burial ground dating back to the nineteenth century. It contains around 200 graves, many of whose tombstones are no longer legible. Members of the PDCHCC are assisting with documenting the tombstones for the heritage record. At the eastern end of the cemetery stands a memorial to the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, who established the nearby Convent Light Street.

We also preserve and assist in keeping alive the contributions of the Missions Etrangeres de Paris (MEP) Fathers who, leaving behind a life in France, travelled to British Malaya and stayed with the locals and evangelised. Sharon Chong and Paul Gerarts have gone to MEP Paris to do further research on the MEP Fathers and their stories. We remember Fr Arnold Garnault (Church of the Assumption - 1786), Fr Adolphe Couellan and Fr Pierre Sorin (Church of St. Anne – 1869), Fr Emile Barillon (Church of St Michael - Ipoh 1890), Bishop Pierre Lambert de la Motte, Bishop Francois Pallu (College General Seminary - 1665), both bishops undergoing the beatification process by the Catholic Church of Vietnam, and many more.

The work of the Penang Diocese Catholic Heritage Conservation Committee reflects a deep commitment to ensuring that Penang's Catholic story, its churches, chapels, cemeteries, religious figures, and communities, remain conserved, honoured, and understood.

Christopher *possesses experience across a diverse array of job portfolios both in the government and private sector. He is happy to share his professional journey and is engaging with the principles outlined in Pope Francis's encyclical Fratelli Tutti to transcend border and embrace a culture of fraternity, social friendship and dialogue.*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

The Original Sin

I once had the privilege of taking a course from James Mackey. In class one day, he shared this story.

A man he knew was part of a hunting expedition in Africa. His group was camped in a jungle. One morning he left camp early, hiked a few miles into the bush by himself, and shot two wild turkeys. Buckling these to his belt, he was walking back toward camp when he heard noises and realised he was being followed. Frightened, his hands tightened on his rifle, and he scanned the woods for movement.

His fear was quickly dispelled. What he saw stalking him was a young boy, about twelve years old, naked and hungry. He realised instantly that what the boy wanted was not him but food. He stopped, opened his belt, let the turkeys fall to the ground, and backed away. The young boy ran up to the turkeys but didn't pick them up. Instead, he looked towards the man and in his native language began asking him for something. Not understanding what the boy was asking but sensing that he wanted permission to take the birds, the man began gesturing to him that it was okay. But the boy still was not at ease. He kept asking and gesturing that he wanted something more.

Finally, in desperation, the boy took several steps back from the turkeys and stood silently with his hands out, open in front of him – waiting until the man came and placed the turkeys into his hands. Then he ran off into the jungle. Despite his hunger and need, he had refused to take the birds but had waited until they were given to him.

This story, in essence, illustrates the antithesis of original sin. This young boy



did what Adam and Eve didn't do. He accepted that life needed to be given to him, that he could not take it on his own, despite his hunger.

What's at stake here? To answer that, we need to look at what constituted the original sin. What did Adam and Eve do that so badly violated God's plan? How is their action the opposite of this young boy's?

The story of the fall of Adam and Eve is coloured throughout, especially at the end (nakedness and shame), with sexual imagery, so much so that we might conclude that their transgression was of a sexual nature. It wasn't. The sexual motif in the story is a metaphor for rape. Adam and Eve took, as by force, something that can only be received in love.

The condition that God gave Adam and Eve might be summarised this way: *"I will give you life. I will bathe you in life. But you must receive it and never take it.* If you receive it, it will always be life-giving, but on the day you begin to take it rather than to receive it, your actions will begin to bring about distrust, alienation, nakedness, shame, and death."

That single commandment summarises the Ten Commandments.

Indeed, we might ask why God gave a commandment to Adam and Eve in the first place. Why a condition? Why not paradise without conditions? The question is a valid one; but in answering it, we must be careful not to see the commandment as a test, as some arbitrary thing that God might have asked or not asked. The condition here isn't arbitrary. *It's something inherent within love itself.* How so?

God made a love-contoured universe so that in the order of things, everything is a gift. In life, nothing may be snatched, grabbed by force, or claimed by right. Life can only be received as a gift, respectfully, in its own time. The same with love. Something is only love and can only give life when it is freely given and freely received. This is written into love's DNA.

Love is not unconditional, and never can be, because there's a condition innate in love itself: to be loved, something must be received as a gift. Conversely, if love is snatched by force rather than respectfully received as a gift, we have a word for that — we call it rape.

The original sin of Adam and Eve wasn't sexual, but it was akin to rape. They wrongfully took what was intended as gift. Our culture, which rewards aggressiveness and tells us that we are foolish not to take for ourselves the good things we want, too often invites us to do the same thing.

It's interesting to note that the story of Adam and Eve was written centuries after the Ten Commandments were given and is an attempt to summarise all of them in a single condition: *"You may receive, but you may never take!"*

That's also the lesson in Jesus' gentle correction of the rich young man: The man had asked, "How can I *possess* eternal life?" Jesus corrects his verb: "You can only *receive* eternal life" – and you must, like the young African boy, stand before life with empty hands and wait until it's given to you.

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***



Making a Difference

Tony Magliano

Prayer is not complete without social justice

Committed Christians know that prayer is the lifeblood of their relationship with the triune God. It raises our minds and hearts to God as we seek his help and opens us to the quiet voice of the Almighty, guiding us through life. Prayer also brings God's peace into our often-stressful lives — the peace that, as St Paul says, "surpasses all understanding."

As St Augustine of Hippo discovered after his failed search for meaning and peace in the empty promises of the world, prayer — especially the complete surrender of oneself to God's will — answers our longing for true meaning and lasting rest. Augustine expressed this beautifully in his timeless prayer: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Yet, while all this is true, prayer is incomplete without social justice.

Pope Leo, in his recent address to a US delegation of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, said that "Saint Vincent de Paul demonstrated that prayer and social justice are not merely complementary but are, in fact, inseparable" (see: *https://bit.ly/475HL42*).

But people of good will, including many Catholics, mistakenly think that social justice is the essential meeting of impoverished people's immediate needs – like giving nutritious food and providing decent shelter to hungry and homeless people. As absolutely necessary as these direct service charitable works of mercy are, they are not the same as social justice.

Social justice is the necessary Catholic Social Teaching principle that prophetically addresses the systemic, root causes of the many injustices like hunger and homelessness suffered by countless brothers and sisters, and tirelessly works to change these unjust political, economic, and cultural systems into systems that equally benefit all people – especially the poor and vulnerable!

Social justice is most beautifully defined as applying the Gospel command to love to all cultural, economic, and political structures.

But since so many rich and powerful people are obviously not willing to let love mould these very structures under their control, Gospel-centred Christians need to courageously and non-violently challenge their injustice in refusing to justly share their wealth and power. This needs to be central in our work for social justice.

So many people have ongoing needs that require our direct service ministries like providing food, shelter, clothing, medical, and financial assistance. But we also need to work ourselves out of this job.

So, for the good of the poor and vulnerable, and for our good too, it is equally important for us to seriously challenge



Pope Leo XIV meets with a delegation of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the United States. (Vatican Media)

the root causes of poverty, hunger and oppression. In the words of Pope St John Paul II, we need to challenge the cultural, economic and political "structures of sin." And if we dare to boldly challenge these "structures of sin," many of the rich and powerful will forcefully oppose us – sometimes even threaten us.

For two decades, the late Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara courageously defended the poor against Brazil's brutal military dictatorships, non-violently confronting them and their rich patrons to stop their military and economic oppression and injustice.

In response, the military and rich verbally and physically threatened Camara, who said: "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist" (see: *https://bit.ly/4ygkMzl*).

Meeting the immediate needs of our poor and hungry brothers and sisters, near and far, using only the one foot of direct service without also stepping out with the other foot of social justice – to address the root causes and "structures of sin" – will keep us hopping around on one foot with no end in sight.

An excellent educational aid here is the US Conference of Catholic Bishops video "The Two Feet of Love in Action." Check it out *https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/two-feet-of-love-in-action*!

Tony Magliano *is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He is available to speak at diocesan or parish gatherings. Tony can be reached at tmag6@comcast.net.*

LITTLE CATHOLIC SCORER

Dear children,

Imagine borrowing your friend's favourite toy, but when they ask for it back, you hide it and act mean! That is exactly how the sneaky helpers in Jesus' story behaved.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us a story about a landowner who built a beautiful vineyard, complete with a protective fence and a tall watchtower. He rented this vineyard to some farmers and went on a long trip.

When harvest time came, the owner sent his servants to collect his share of the fruit. But the greedy farmers grabbed the servants — beating one, stoning another, and killing a third! The patient owner sent even more servants, but the farmers treated them just as badly. Finally, the owner sent his own son, thinking, "They will respect my son."

Instead, the farmers threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him so they could steal the land for themselves.

God is the landowner, and the world is His vineyard. For years, God sent messengers (the prophets) to teach people how to love, but the leaders rejected them. Finally, God sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus was warning the people that because the leaders were rejecting Him too, God would give His kingdom to new, faithful followers who would actually do good things.

God trusts us to look after His world today. We can show Him we are good helpers by sharing, being kind, and listening to Jesus. When we make good choices, we are producing the "good fruit" that makes God happy!



Love, Aunty C

Word Search

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

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → and ↓ and ↘

JESUS	SON	SHARE
VINEYARD	SERVANTS	TRUTH
GRAPES	LOVE	
FRUIT	KINDNESS	
OWNER	FORGIVE	

A VINEYARD OF LOVE ♥

Draw Your Good Fruit

What good fruit can you grow in your heart?

Write or draw your answers inside the grapes.

Good hearts bear good fruit! ♥

Good Fruit or Bad Fruit?

Colour the good fruit and leave the bad fruit uncoloured.

I share my toys.

I laugh when someone falls.

I help Mum.

I refuse to forgive.

I say thank you.

I tell the truth.

I hit my sibling.

I talk to Jesus everyday.

I yell at my teacher.

I lie to my parents.

"By their fruits you will know them." Matthew 7:16

Good fruit shows God's love in us! ♥

YOUTH

YOUM.A.D 3.0

A missionary experience at Batu Arang





BATU ARANG: What began as a four-day missionary camp became an invitation for young adults to see people differently — not as refugees, migrants, the sick or the marginalised, but as brothers and sisters bearing the dignity and presence of Christ.

Organised by Caritas Penang in collaboration with the Islanders Tamil Youth Network (ITYN), the three-night programme brought young adults to Batu Arang, Gombak, to encounter refugees and people living with HIV/AIDS. Rather than simply exposing participants to unfamiliar realities, the camp taught them to reflect and respond through the See–Judge–Act method.

Using *Three Days at Perch,* a handbook published by Kumpulan A.C.T.S., Jesuit priest Fr Paul Dass, SJ guided participants through Catholic Social Teaching and the Pastoral Spiral. Gospel meditation, personal prayer and open conversations also helped them connect what they were learning with their own faith and experiences.

On the second day, the participants were divided into three groups. Two visited the St Peter Favre Refugee Convalescence Home (PERCH), while the third served at the Positive Living Community.

They carried one question with them: "Where is God leading me in this?"

The question encouraged them to enter each encounter with humility — not merely to help, but to listen, learn and allow themselves to be changed.

Group 1: Love that becomes contagious

The first group visited PERCH's shelter for men, where refugees who arrived sick, abandoned and without hope receive treatment, care and support during recovery.

Rachel Maria of the Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Permatang Tinggi, was struck by the love shown to complete strangers — people who had experienced persecution and rejection, yet were cared for as members of one human family.

Many residents who had recovered extended a hand to those who arrived after them. For Rachel, their willingness to pass on the care they had received revealed how "contagious" love can become.

The young visitors listened to the men, spoke with them and assisted with simple tasks. Some residents lay in bed but could still smile and laugh. Others grieved their loss of mobility and could see or hear their families only through a mobile phone.

As the young people listened, relationships began to form. They shared tears, prayed with the residents and tried to lift their spirits.

"Our visit was not an ordinary visit," Rachel reflected. "It became hours of realisation — of stepping outside the world we know and recognising that there are people who need care and love, and who deserve the same dignity as all of us."

Group 2: Truly seeing the person

At PERCH 2, the second group met women and children who had endured human trafficking, abuse, violence, war, separation and other forms of trauma.

Despite their painful experiences, the residents welcomed the visitors with smiles and hugs. The group helped to prepare lunch and conducted clay art activities with the children. These simple moments allowed them to connect naturally and share a little in the residents' daily lives.

Among those they met were teenage girls separated from their families. PERCH provided not only shelter and basic necessities, but also education and opportunities to build a future.

Marissa of the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam, was especially moved by the residents' stories of conflict, journeys to Malaysia and separation from parents and siblings. Their suffering reminded her that every person carries a story others may never fully know. Yet their courage and hope remained visible.

The encounter also gave new meaning to See–Judge–Act. To see was not merely to observe from a distance, but to listen and understand another person's reality. To judge was to reflect on that reality through faith, conscience and Catholic Social Teaching. To act was to respond in a way that allowed faith to become concrete.

"To truly see someone is to recognise their dignity, listen to their story and allow their reality to touch our hearts," Marissa said. "Only then can our judgement become more compassionate and our actions more meaningful."

Group 3: The ministry of presence

The third group visited the Positive Living Community, where service began not with the activities they had carefully planned, but with something far more immediate: cleaning the residents' dusty living and sleeping areas.

As Linda of City Parish, George Town, cleaned, she thought of her own parents growing older. The experience softened her heart and deepened her awareness of the need to care for and respect the elderly.

Afterwards, the group shared a meal with the residents and listened to their stories. Seeing their joy over a special meal was moving, particularly as such meals were usually available only when visitors came.

"It opened my eyes to another side of the world, where people may live in isolation yet continue to live with peace, dignity and grace," Linda shared. "Even simple acts of service and companionship can make a meaningful difference."

Brendda of the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh, also discovered that God's plan for the visit differed from theirs. Instead of beginning with organised engagement, the group cleaned, talked with residents and shared lunch.

Those ordinary moments showed her how much the gift of time and presence could mean. When the caretaker, Gabriel, explained that the residents rarely received visitors, Brendda felt called to encourage young people and altar servers in her parish to become involved in similar outreach.

The experience left her with a challenging question: "What would Jesus do?"

"If Jesus would never abandon His people, how can we?" she reflected. "Here I am, Lord. Send me."

Changed by those they came to serve

As the four days drew to a close, the participants realised that the camp was not ultimately about how much they could do for others. It was about learning to be present, to listen, to see and to be changed.

They had arrived intending to serve, but received something greater in return. The people they met carried stories of pain, loss and separation, yet continued to offer smiles, laughter and hope. They showed that hope does not depend upon a perfect life; sometimes it is the courage to rise each day, move forward and believe that life still has meaning.

Through See–Judge–Act, the participants learnt to look beyond labels. Refugees, migrants, the poor and the sick are first and foremost people — each with a story, each created in God's image, and each deserving to be seen, heard and loved.

They also discovered that mission need not always be dramatic. It may mean sitting beside someone, listening without judgement, sharing a meal, playing with a child, cleaning a room or offering a smile. Such acts may appear small, but they can assure another person that they have not been forgotten.

The participants left Batu Arang with new questions, changed perspectives and a deeper understanding of discipleship. Following Christ, they realised, is not confined to prayer within a church. It also means recognising Him in the people encountered beyond its walls.

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me." — Matthew 25:40







Miri Youth Day calls youth to courage and mission

Miri Youth Day (MYD) 2026 brought together 882 young people from 14 parishes across the Diocese of Miri from August 28 to 31 for four days of prayer, formation and fellowship.

Guided by the theme *Take Courage, I Have Overcome the World* (John 16:33), the gathering invited participants to deepen their faith, discern their vocation and renew their commitment to Christ and His Church.

The event opened with Mass on August 28, during which the MYD Cross was handed over by Lapok Parish, the previous host, to the Church of St Dominic and the Rosary (SDRC). Accompanied by the flags of all 14 parishes, the handover symbolised their shared faith and mission.

The following morning began with Mass and formation centred on the call to go *Into the Deep*. Fr Sylvester Ngau encouraged participants to move beyond a superficial faith, trust Christ more fully and respond courageously to God's call.

Participants then choose among three breakout sessions: vocation, servant leadership and the Taizé experience.

Deacon Joel Rut invited the young men to remain open to the priesthood and prayerfully discern whether God might be calling them to serve the Church. Sr Delicia Klumai, speaking on servant leadership, emphasised that Christian leadership is rooted not in power, position or recognition, but in service that lifts others and leads them closer to Christ.

In the Taizé session, Maria Amella KAYC introduced participants to the history, purpose and prayerful chants of the community. This prepared them for that evening's Taizé prayer and Eucharistic Adoration, when the lively pace of MYD gave way to silence and reflection. Participants were invited to place their hopes, fears, struggles and dreams before the Lord and listen for His gentle voice amid the distractions of life.

On Aug 30, the young people took part in *Love Letter to God,* a personal reflection activity through which they expressed their gratitude, hopes, struggles and prayers. Sunday Mass with Bishop Richard Ng followed, together with an informal time of fellowship that allowed them to interact more personally with their shepherd.

Group sharing sessions later allowed participants to reflect on how God had touched their lives during the gathering.

That evening, the *Celebration of the Cross (Pesta Salib)* began with the Journey of the Cross being handed over by St Joseph's Cathedral to SDRC. The Cross and 14 parish flags were then carried in procession, presenting a vivid image of diverse parish communities journeying together in one faith.

The celebration continued with praise and worship and an altar call, inviting the young people to open their hearts, surrender their lives to God, and encounter Christ personally.

MYD 2026 concluded with Mass on Aug 31, but its closing was also a sending forth. Bishop Richard led the Prayer of Commissioning, calling the young people to carry their renewed faith, friendships and commitment into their parishes and communities.

During the Mass, Holy Cross Parish, Sungai Asap, was announced as the host of Miri Youth Day 2028, marking the beginning of the next stage of the diocesan youth journey.

The four-day gathering affirmed that young people are not merely the future of the Church; they are the Church today — called to deepen their faith, discern their vocation, lead through service and bring the hope of Christ to the world.

The Cross and the responsibility of mission have been handed on. The journey now continues towards Sungai Asap in 2028. **Grace Cindy Terry (MYD 2026 Coordinator)**

Rooted in faith, standing strong

KUALA LUMPUR: Young people cannot avoid every storm, but they can learn how to stand through one.

Helping them develop that inner strength was the focus of UNSHAKEN Youth Camp 2.0, organised by the Good Shepherd Church (GSC) Mental Health Ministry on September 12 at the parish function hall in Setapak.

The one-day camp brought together GSC teenagers and young shepherds aged 13 to 17 for a day of learning, reflection and fellowship centred on the theme *Rooted Deep, Standing Strong.*

The follow-up programme encouraged participants to build firm foundations of faith, healthy relationships and self-awareness so that they could face life's pressures with courage and resilience. Through guided sessions and interactive activities, they were invited to understand themselves better, recognise the support available to them and explore healthier ways of responding to difficulties.



Registered and licensed counsellor Mary Chuah and her team facilitated the programme, creating a safe and welcoming environment in which the young people could listen, share and participate openly.

Shared meals and informal conversations also allowed friendships to take root and strengthened the participants' sense of belonging within the parish community.

Beyond the activities, UNSHAKEN 2.0 carried an important reminder: no young person should have to struggle alone. Life's challenges may test their confidence and faith, but trusted companions, sound values and strong spiritual roots can help them remain steady and continue growing.

The GSC Mental Health Ministry expressed its appreciation to Mary Chuah and her team, as well as the organisers, volunteers, parents and participants who made the camp possible.

The gathering may have lasted only a day, but its invitation continues: stay rooted, keep growing and, whatever the storm, remain unshaken. **Dr Mark David Edward Nathan**

Nicol David: Faith, courage and giving back



KUALA LUMPUR: When Datuk Nicol Ann David received the 2026 Merdeka Award on September 4, it recognised more than an extraordinary sporting career. It honoured a Malaysian who has chosen to turn success into service.

Nicol received the award for Outstanding Contribution to Humanities, Arts and Sports, one of eight individuals and organisations recognised this year for their sustained contributions to the nation. HRH Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, Sultan of Perak and Royal Patron and Chairman of the Merdeka Award Trust, presented the award.

For many Malaysians, Nicol David is synonymous with excellence. But before she became a world champion, she was simply a young girl growing up in Penang.

Born in Penang, Nicol attended the Convent Green Lane schools. She began playing squash at five and started receiving coaching at eight. Her journey started at the Bukit Dumbar Squash Centre, where her talent was recognised and nurtured.

It would eventually lead to one of the greatest careers in Malaysian sport.

Nicol held the world No. 1 ranking for a record 108 consecutive months and won the World Championship eight times. Her determination and discipline made her one of Malaysia's most admired athletes.

But her story did not end when she put down her racquet.

In 2022, she founded the Nicol David Organisation to empower children, families and schools through sport, education and mental wellbeing. Its programmes have reached thousands of Malaysians.

For Nicol, sport is about more than winning. It teaches discipline, teamwork and confidence, while giving young people the courage to dream. It reminds us that young people are valued and belong.

There is another dimension to Nicol's journey that she speaks about with quiet conviction.

When I asked her about the role of faith in her life, she replied: "God and my faith in God put me through various life challenges. I am grateful to God for what I am today."

It is a simple statement, but it offers a glimpse into the person behind the champion. For Nicol, her achievements are not hers alone. Gratitude and faith have helped sustain her through the challenges of a demanding journey.

Receiving the Merdeka Award, she described it as one of the proudest moments of her life. Yet she also said the honour represented something "so much bigger than my sporting career" — the opportunity Malaysia gave her to dream, pursue those dreams and become who she is today.

We often measure a champion by the trophies, records and rankings. But a life of significance is measured differently: by the lives we touch, the opportunities we create for others and the hope we leave behind.

Nicol David has shown Malaysians what it means to reach the top of the world. Today, she is showing us that reaching the top is not the end of the journey. It begins a new chapter.

The real victory is helping others believe that they, too, can dream beyond what they think is possible.

From a young girl in Penang to a world champion, Nicol is now using the platform she earned to help the next generation discover its own potential — with faith, gratitude and a desire to give back to society. Emeritus **Professor Christopher Ng Kwan Hoong**

MEMORIAM

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



2nd Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Doreen Mary Sequerah

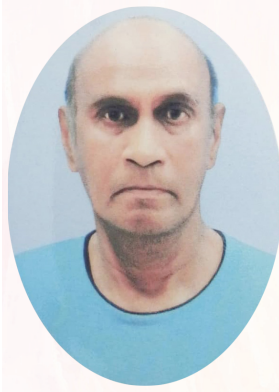
1 October 1956 – 5 October 2024

Her Smile

Though her smile is gone forever and her hand we cannot touch, we still have so many memories of her that we loved so much. Her memories are now our keepsakes which with us will never part. God has her in His keeping, we have her in our hearts. Sadly missed, but never forgotten.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Deeply missed and loved by
Husband, children, daughter-in-law,
grandchildren and loved ones.



12th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of a Beloved Husband, Father & Grandfather

FELIX THESEIRA

From the Lord:
8th Feb 1948
To the Lord:
4th Oct 2014

Time changes nothing, we still grieve just as much today as when we lost you. In our hearts you will remain loved, remembered and cherished every day.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated on 4th October at the Church of St Anthony, Pudu at 9.45am.

Deeply missed, loved and remembered
by loving wife and sons.

21st Anniversary
In Loving Memory of



John Baptist Yeo Ah Han
Called to the Lord: 07-10-2005

"In God's care you rest above,
in our hearts you stay with love.
We will always love and remember you."

Deeply missed and fondly remembered by
Family, relatives and friends.

Who was Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen?



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was a priest, scholar, author and pioneering broadcaster who brought Catholic teaching into millions of homes through radio and television. Behind his public ministry was a daily Eucharistic Holy Hour, which he called "the hour that makes my day".

Born Peter John Sheen in Illinois in 1895, he became known as Fulton, his mother's maiden name. Ordained for the Diocese of Peoria in 1919, he studied philosophy in Belgium before teaching at The Catholic University of America. He sought to explain the faith with clarity and warmth, whether speaking to a congregation, a classroom or a national audience.

From 1930, his radio programme *The Catholic Hour* introduced listeners to Catholic teaching. His television series *Life Is Worth Living*, launched in 1951, reached an even wider audience. With little more than a chalkboard, Sheen addressed faith, suffering, family and human dignity, combining theological insight with humour and storytelling. He also wrote numerous books, including *Life of Christ.*

Sheen served as national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and visited missions around the world. Appointed an auxiliary bishop of New York in 1951 and Bishop of Rochester in 1966, he participated in the Second Vatican Council. He retired in 1969 and continued to write, preach and lead retreats until his death in 1979.

Sheen's devotion to prayer shaped all these roles. For him, preaching about Christ began with listening to Christ before the Blessed Sacrament. His cause for sainthood opened in 2002, and a miracle attributed to his intercession was approved in 2019. He was beatified in St Louis, Missouri, on September 24, 2026.

Vatican News



25th Memorial Anniversary

Patrick Dass Raymond

Came from the Lord:
24-05-1981
Returned to the Lord:
05-10-2001

25 years have passed, yet you remain forever in our hearts. We thank God for the gift of your life and for the precious memories and love you left behind.

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." John 11:25

Forever loved, remembered and missed
Parents: Ramailaoo @ Raymond & the late Thirasa Sinnappan (Mom)
Sister: Diane Pravina Raymond
Brother: Captain Yogamainthan @ Joshua Raymond
Sister-in-law: Marissa Jokin
Niece: Yhovela Thirasanne Yogamainthan
Relatives & Friends.

NOTICE

The cost for placing a memoriam is RM150 per column.

For enquiries, please contact us:

Tel/WhatApp:
03-2026 8291

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

19th Year Memorial



Sr Cecilia Josephine
29th September 2007

"Well done good and faithful servant"
Matthew 25:23

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord and let your perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul rest in peace. Amen.

3rd Anniversary
In Loving Memory of the late



MONICA HIEW NYOK MOOI
3rd Aug 1939 - 3rd Oct 2023

"The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want" [Psalm 23]

Deeply missed and fondly remembered by:

Children & their spouses:

Patricia Yong & Bernard Thio
Angila Yong
Beleena Yong & Raymond Goh
Catherine Yong & Benzamin Kolenus
Peter Yong

Grandchildren & their spouses:

Alexandre Thio, Divij Mathur &
Niam Xavier Mathur,
Thomas Thio
Gabriel Goh,
Michael Goh & Stella Oh
Nichole Goh
Leonard Benzamin
Maurice Benzamin



EDEN
FUNERAL

013 311 5722
012 648 5722

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

Pre Planning

Discount Up To 30%

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

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

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

CLICKTOPRAY
TOGETHER, WE MAKE EACH DAY DIFFERENT
Download the Click To Pray *updates now.*
Download on the App Store
ANDROID APP ON Google play

ISSN 1394 - 3294
9 771394 329008
October 4, 2026

Fulton Sheen, 'porter' to Christ, beatified

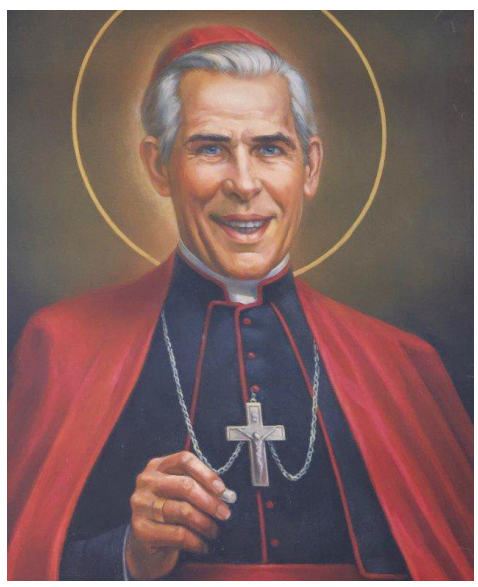
ST LOUIS: Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, whose preaching brought the Catholic faith into millions of homes through radio and television, was beatified on September 24 at The Dome at America's Centre.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, representing Pope Leo XIV, presided over the Mass. After the decree declaring Sheen "blessed" was read, a portrait of the American archbishop was unveiled to applause from the crowd. His feast day will be observed on December 9, the anniversary of his death in 1979.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle said Sheen's gift for communication and his wide audience did not define his mission. What mattered was his closeness to Christ and his concern for people who were poor or vulnerable.

The cardinal recalled Sheen's response when Pope Pius XII asked how many people he had brought into the Church. Sheen said he had never counted them, lest he be tempted to claim them as his own. He saw himself as "simply a porter" who could lead people to the open door of God's house.

"Blessed are you, porter to the door of God's house!" Cardinal Tagle said. He urged Catholics to follow Sheen's example by proclaiming Christ with humility and



recognising him in those who suffer.

Among those present was James Fulton Engstrom, whose recovery as a newborn after 61 minutes without a heartbeat was recognised by the Church as a miracle attributed to Sheen's intercession. Now 16, he presented relics during the Mass.

Sheen's influence also reached well beyond the United States. Fr Solomon Patrick Zaku, national director of the Pontifical



Cardinal Luis Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, elevates the book of the Gospels at the beatification Mass for Blessed Fulton J. Sheen held September 24, 2026, at The Dome at America's Centre in St Louis. (OSV News photo/Margaret Murray)

Mission Societies in Nigeria, said reading about Sheen as a seminarian inspired him to make a daily Holy Hour part of his life. He also prays the World Mission Rosary introduced by Sheen.

For those who gathered in St Louis, the beatification honoured a pioneering broadcaster whose enduring message was to lead people beyond the messenger to Christ. **EWTN News**

Different faiths, one hope for peace

KUALA LUMPUR: The message *May Peace Prevail on Earth* now stands in four languages on the grounds of the Church of the Sacred Heart (SHC), Jalan Peel — a lasting symbol of the friendship and unity shared by Malaysians of different faiths and cultures.

The Peace Pole was planted during a joint celebration of the International Day of Peace and Malaysia Day on September 19, which brought together people of diverse religious, racial and cultural backgrounds.

Held under the theme *Invest in Peace — For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day,* the event was jointly organised by Sacred Heart parish, the Interfaith Spiritual Fellowship (INSaF) and the Pure Life Society (PLS).

Of the 280 people who registered, 220 recorded their attendance. Although the haze affected the turnout and prevented the planned outdoor Peace Walk, participants walked together within the church compound — demonstrating that even when circumstances change, the journey towards peace can continue.

The morning featured a lively Zumba session, multicultural performances, messages of peace and fellowship over breakfast and lunch.

A highlight was the planting of the Peace Pole bearing its universal message in English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin and Tamil — reflecting Malaysia's multicultural and multilingual identity.

Organisers said it was the first Peace Pole to be planted within the grounds of a religious institution in Malaysia. Intended to remain at SHC for generations, it serves as a visible reminder of the shared responsibility to promote peace, mutual respect, interfaith understanding and harmony.

Cultural performances through music, dance and tradition further celebrated the richness of Malaysia's diversity. They showed that differences in faith, language and culture need not divide society, but can enrich the nation when embraced with respect and friendship.

Among those present were Datuk Azizulrahman Mohd Hussain Malim, a member of the DBKL Advisory Board and chairman of MPP Parlimen Titiwangsa; representing Titiwangsa MP Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani; Fr Xavier Andrew, ecclesiastical assistant for AMEIA; INSaF chairman Dr Amir Farid Isahak; Madrasah Kampung Pandan chairman Haji Mohd Iqbal Mohd Basir; International Peace Mission/World Syahadah Council vice-president Datin Paduka Prof Dr Khadijah Md Jadi; and Deacon Albert Arputhan of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

Their messages underscored the importance of dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation among Malaysians. Their presence also reflected what can be achieved when people of different religions work together for the common good.

Datuk Azizulrahman praised the warmth and vibrant spirit he experienced at the Church of the Sacred Heart and expressed hope that such an interfaith and multicultural gathering could become an annual parish event.

Special appreciation was extended to parish priest Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam for his encouragement, support and financial assis-



tance, and to INSaF and the Pure Life Society for giving the parish the opportunity to host the celebration.

The organisers also thanked the committee members, volunteers, youth, SHC choir, performers, hospitality and registration teams, technical crew, media team, emcees and others who worked behind the scenes.

By bringing together the International Day of Peace and Malaysia Day, the celebration turned the ideals of peace and national unity into a lived experience. For several hours, people of different faiths, races, cultures and languages walked, celebrated and shared a meal together as friends.

The challenge now is to carry that same spirit beyond the event — building bridges of understanding in homes, neighbourhoods, places of worship and the wider community.

May the Malaysia envisioned that day become the Malaysia its people choose to build together: one where diversity is celebrated, friendship crosses religious and cultural boundaries, and peace is everyone's responsibility. **Thomas Chinniah, PMEIA, Church of the Sacred Heart**



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