The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

There will be no issue on September 20, 2026.
Our next issue will be on September 27, 2026.

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For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.
Rom. 14:7-8



Catholics called to regenerate hope for creation
■ P7



A filmmaker for Christ
■ P12



Pre-PDYD-6 Phase 3: **Abundant Catch**
■ P16

Harming creation is a SIN



(OSV News photo/Stephane Mahe, Reuters)

ROME: Harming the natural world is not simply an environmental failure but a sin that wounds humanity's relationship with God, neighbour and creation, the International Theological Commission has declared in a new call for ecological conversion.

The Commission's document, *Caring for Our Common Home: A Responsible and Fraternal Response to the Triune God,* was published on September 2. It was authorised for release by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, after being presented to Pope Leo XIV.

Building on Pope Francis' landmark encyclical *Laudato Si',* published more than a decade ago, the document proposes the expression "sin against creation and the Creator" as a more precise way of describing ecological wrongdoing.

The phrase, it explains, encompasses both the harm inflicted upon nature and the failure to recognise — or outright rejection of — God's plan entrusting humanity with the stewardship and care of our common home.

When people fail to care for creation with wisdom and concern for the future, they not only mistreat the natural world but also harm their neighbours, particularly the poor and generations yet to come.

"Sin against creation," the document states, concerns "our relationship with God the Creator, with our neighbours, and with creation itself", distorting the three relationships that define human existence.

The Commission argues that the ecological crisis is therefore not merely scientific, economic or political. It is fundamentally theological because the way humanity treats creation reflects and shapes its relationship with God.

Msgr Piero Coda, Secretary General of the International Theological Commission, said the document's proposal to understand environmental wrongdoing in a manner similar to "social sin" and "structures of sin" was particularly significant.

The severity of the ecological crisis, he said, calls for a conversion that must take root spiritually and religiously if it is to bring lasting cultural, social, economic and political change.

The document traces a threefold transformation in humanity's relationship with nature since the 16th century: the loss of an understanding of nature as God's creation; the rise of an increasingly anthropocentric and predatory attitude; and the emergence of a planetary ecological crisis.

Its first chapter reflects on creation as bearing the imprint of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Drawing upon St Hildegard of Bingen's description of creation as "a second Scripture", together with the writings of St Augustine, St Bonaventure and St Thomas Aquinas, it presents the natural world as a sign of the Creator.

The second chapter examines humanity's place within creation through the Genesis account. The mandate to exercise dominion, it stresses, is a vocation to cultivate, protect and serve — not permission to exploit.

Citing United Nations reports, the document highlights biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, and the environmental devastation caused by war. It notes that the poorest nations and communities often suffer the gravest consequences despite contributing least to the crisis.

The Commission rejects two extremes: a "predatory anthropocentrism" that treats creation as property to be exploited, and a radical biocentrism that denies humanity's unique place and responsibility within creation.

Instead, it advocates "situated anthropocentrism", which recognises the human person not as creation's absolute master but as its steward and servant.

This vocation finds its fullest expression in the Eucharist, described as an "ecological school" from which flows the spirituality needed to sustain humanity's urgent ecological conversion.

The final chapter translates that conversion into daily life, calling for mindful consumption, balanced rhythms of work and rest, reverence for creation, respect for life, responsible use of resources and attentive listening to both "the cry of the Earth and the poor".

It also encourages interreligious cooperation, saying the world's religions can work together to protect creation and promote the flourishing of life.

Published during the Season of Creation, which runs from September 1 to October 4, the document delivers a clear challenge: caring for the Earth is not an optional concern added to Christian faith. It is part of fidelity to the Creator, responsibility towards one another and the moral duty to safeguard the home entrusted to all. **OSV News**

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Who do we mean when we say "We"?

Malaysia Day gives us a small but revealing word to consider: **We**.

We speak easily of *our* country, *our* people and *our* future. Yet the meaning of "we" is tested not during national celebrations, but when opinions clash and another community's suffering demands something from us. Who is included in our "we" — and who remains outside it?

As we celebrate our 63rd Malaysia Day on September 16, the question is not simply whether this nation belongs to us, but whether we behave as though we belong to one another.

For Christians, belonging carries responsibility. We cannot claim to love Malaysia while remaining unconcerned about Malaysians whose lives differ from ours. Nor can our contribution be confined to praying for the nation once a year, attending an interreligious gathering or decorating the parish with Malaysian flags.

Christ calls us to be salt and light amid the hopes and wounds of our nation. The Catholic Church must form disciples who are also responsible citizens — people whose faith shapes how they work, speak, use their influence, care for creation and respond to injustice.

The *Rukun Negara* offers a valuable mirror for that responsibility. Its five principles — Belief in God; Loyalty to King and Country; Supremacy of the Constitution; Rule of Law; and Courtesy and Morality — are familiar to most Malaysians, even if some of us need Google to remember their correct order.

These principles were intended to nurture unity and guide our common life. Yet they achieve little when recited ceremonially but ignored practically.

Belief in God should produce humility and compassion, not religious superiority. Loyalty to King and Country includes the courage to resist hatred, corruption and division. Respect for the Constitution and the rule of law cannot depend on whether something benefits our own community. Courtesy and morality must be evident in how we treat migrant workers, refugees, people of other faiths, political opponents and those who can offer us nothing in return.

They must also survive our entry into social media, where courtesy sometimes disappears faster than fried chicken at a parish function.

The *Rukun Negara* reminds us that nation-building requires both sound institutions and good character. Laws matter, but so do the habits of the human heart. A society cannot legislate itself into unity while its people continue to nourish prejudice, suspicion and resentment.

This is where synodality has something important to offer Malaysia. It is not merely a Church meeting technique or a fashionable Catholic word. At its heart is a discipline our nation urgently needs: listening without immediately becoming defensive, making room for unfamiliar voices and recognising that no group possesses the entire story.

By the time this issue reaches readers, the Malaysia Pastoral Convention in Sibu will have concluded. At the time of writing, we do not yet know what will emerge from the conversations among representatives of the nine dioceses. But one conviction need not wait for a final statement: delegates cannot do our listening, conversion and bridge-building for us.

Synodality cannot be outsourced to those who attended the convention. It must enter our dioceses, parishes, ministries, families and everyday relationships.

A Catholic parish should offer the nation a glimpse of life across differences. Malaysians of various ethnicities, languages, generations and incomes gather around the same altar. Yet sharing a pew does not necessarily mean sharing one another's lives; quiet struggles within our parish community can remain unseen and unanswered.

Walking together means refusing to care only when "our own people" are affected. Someone should not need to share our race, religion, language or region before their hardship touches us. When a family struggles, a place of worship is disrespected, a child is denied opportunity, or an elderly or disabled Malaysian is overlooked, it should concern us all. If Malaysia is our home, every Malaysian must have a place within our circle of concern.

The Church's credibility will be seen in what people encounter in its communities. Are our parishes welcoming? Are our employment practices just? Do our schools teach respect for difference? Will we speak when human dignity is threatened, even when silence is easier?

At 63, Malaysia should no longer regard diversity as an inconvenience to be managed. It is a trust placed in our hands. Unity does not require us to erase our differences; it asks us to carry them with maturity, fairness and mutual respect.

Perhaps our prayer this Malaysia Day should not end with "God bless Malaysia". We should also pray: **God, make us a blessing to Malaysia.**

A Church that listens before judging, serves without discrimination and walks with those left behind will show our nation what "we" can truly mean.

Patricia Pereira

The heavy price of holding a grudge

Reflecting on our **Sunday Readings**
with Fr George Packiasamy

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: Sirach 27: 30 – 28: 7;
Romans 14: 7-9;
Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Some wounds fade with time. Others remain surprisingly fresh. A name is mentioned, a message appears on our phone, or we unexpectedly meet someone — and suddenly the hurt we thought we had buried comes back to life.

This is why Peter's question to Jesus feels so honest: "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

Peter is not asking whether forgiveness is good. He already knows that. He wants to know when he has forgiven enough. At what point may he finally say, "I have tried. I have been patient. Now I am entitled to remain angry".

Jesus replies, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven." He is not giving Peter a higher number to record in a spiritual account book. He is telling him that forgiveness is not a transaction to be counted but a way of life for those who have experienced God's mercy.

Jesus then tells the parable of a servant who owes his master an impossible amount. Unable to repay it, he begs for patience, and the master does something astonishing: he cancels the entire debt.

But the servant leaves that encounter unchanged. He finds a fellow servant who owes him a much smaller amount, grabs him by the throat and demands immediate repayment. The mercy he received never reaches the way he treats another person.

That is the tragedy of the story. His debt was cancelled, but his heart remained imprisoned.

We may recognise something of ourselves in him. We ask God to forgive our sins, weaknesses and repeated failures. We depend upon His patience every day. Yet when someone hurts us, we can become very efficient record-keepers. We remember what was said, when it was said, how it was said and who was present. We may forget where we left our keys, but an offence from ten years ago remains safely stored in perfect detail.

Sirach warns us that wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner "hugs them tight". That is a striking image because resentment can become strangely comforting. It allows us to replay the story with ourselves as the innocent victim and the other person as the permanent villain. Holding on to anger can make us feel powerful, but eventually the grudge begins to hold us.

This does not mean that forgiveness is easy or that every relationship must return to what it was. Forgiveness is not pretending that nothing happened. It does not excuse cruelty, erase consequences, or require someone to remain in an abusive or unhealthy situation. Boundaries may still be necessary. Justice may still need to be pursued. Trust, once broken, may take time to rebuild — and sometimes it may never be restored.

Forgiveness simply means refusing to allow another person's wrongdoing to rule our inner life. It is surrendering our desire for revenge and placing judgement in God's hands. It is saying: "You wounded me, but I will not allow this wound to determine the person I become."

For me, as a priest, preaching about forgiveness is my personal struggle, and it is not easy to preach.

I had an elder brother, and over the years we carried a lot of anger and grudges between us. We found it difficult to confront each other, and for years, we simply kept our distance. I eventually ignored him, perhaps thinking that ignoring the relationship was easier than facing the hurt.

Then I came to know that he had been diagnosed with cancer and was already in the final stage of his illness. Suddenly, the things I had carried in my heart for so many years looked very different. I began to pray earnestly: "Lord, help me to reconcile with my brother before it is too late."

By God's grace, we were able to meet. We spoke, we reconciled, and there was peace between us before he left this world.

But I want to be honest here — even today, I realise that the anger and the old grudges have not completely disappeared from my heart. Sometimes I feel as though the debt has been settled between us, but deep inside, I am still holding on to part of it.

Perhaps this is the heavy price of holding a grudge. The other person may have moved on. The situation may have ended. The person may even have died. But if we continue carrying the debt in our hearts, we are the ones who remain imprisoned.

Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

September

7-14	Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 – Sibu
16	Diaconate Ordination of Lincoln Lee, Joseph Tan, Tony Bingkuan OFMCap and Albert Arputhan – Church of the Divine Mercy, Shah Alam
19	Confirmation – Church of Sts Peter & Paul, Banting
20	Migrant Sunday – Church of St Joseph, Sentul
24	Meeting – KL Archdiocese Pastoral Council
27	Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Cameron Highlands
27/9-2/10	Clergy Annual Retreat

Penang Diocese

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

September

15-18	FJM Reflexology International Conference, Taiwan
19	Confirmation – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam at 8.00am
20	Closing Mass of East Asia Regional Conference - Catholic Engaged Encounter – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam at 8.00am
24	Blessing of Our Lady's Grotto, Simee Home, Ipoh at 11.00am
25	Annual General Meeting – Malaysian Catholic Education Council at 2.30pm, Kuala Lumpur
27	Mass – 75th Anniversary of Christ the King, Kulai, Johor at 10.00am

Malacca Johore Diocese

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

September

16	Confirmation, Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of St Henry, Batu Pahat
19	MJD CHARIS Leaders' Session with the Bishop – Church of St Louis, Kluang
20-25	Clergy Annual Retreat (Retreat 4) – MAJODI Centre
26	Mass – Family Day, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
27	Mass – 75th Anniversary, Church of Christ the King, Kulai

Blessed Sacrament Church receives RM230,000 grant

KUCHING: Blessed Sacrament Church BDC has received a RM230,000 grant from the Sarawak Government's Unit for Other Religions (UNIFOR) for upgrading works at the church.

The grant was handed over to the Parish Council by Kota Sentosa assemblyman Wilfred Yap during a ceremony on August 29.

The funding followed an application by the church, which Yap had earlier supported.

Yap said the assistance reflected the Sarawak Government's commitment to supporting places of worship and strengthening community facilities regardless of religious or ethnic background.

"I believe that our places of worship play an important role not only in spiritual life, but also in bringing communities together," he said.

He said maintaining and upgrading places of worship was part of the state's broader effort to ensure communities had



access to safe, functional and conducive facilities.

"Regardless of race or religion, every community deserves the opportunity to have safe, functional and conducive facilities," he said.

Yap also expressed appreciation to the Sarawak Government and UNIFOR for their continued support for places of worship throughout the state.

He congratulated the Parish Council and parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church BDC, and expressed hope that the grant would enable the church to carry out the necessary improvements.

"I hope this grant will help the church carry out the necessary improvements and provide a better environment for parishioners and the wider community for many years to come," he said.

The assistance is part of Sarawak's ongoing support for places of worship and community infrastructure across the state.

Yap also reaffirmed his commitment to working with religious and community organisations in Kota Sentosa to facilitate assistance and development opportunities for local communities.

Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #287

F12 MJD NEWS UPDATES



Welcome dear friends,

Merdeka celebrations are over. Coming next is ***Malaysia Day,*** September 16.

The Malaysian Catholic Church prepared for the ***MPC2026,*** with 800 delegates converging at Sibu. MJD sent 70 reps.

On September 5, the Caritas MJD volunteers gathered at the Good Shepherd Seminary, Melaka for their day of recollection; and the Creation Justice Ministry for their ***REGENERATE 2.0 launch*** at St Mary's, Air Salak.

Local Takes! Another Merdeka.

The 69th Hari Kebangsaan had the theme *Malaysia Madani: Kesejahteraan Dinikmati* (Shared Wellbeing), with three areas of focus:

1. ***Tangible quality of life,*** where everyday *rakyat* actually feel safer, healthier, better connected, and more financially stable.
2. ***Shared inclusivity,*** where all ethnic groups, cultures and regions have an equitable share in the national wealth, quality education, housing and infrastructure.
3. ***Social harmony*** where we move past political, racial and religious divisions to solve socio-economic problems.

But shared wellbeing or prosperity is under threat. ***The nation won't prosper:***

1. When "crab and frog" mentality prevails.
2. When one builds, another sabotages.
3. When fear and suspicion are fanned.
4. When bigotry and hate speeches are normalised.
5. When the rule of law is not enforced
6. When distractions are created to divert attention from fighting corruption, strengthening institutions of law and order, improving education and health care, creating quality jobs and addressing rising cost of living.

Looks like 69 years is still not enough to become ***Merdeka people*** or Malaysians.

Reading the Signs: Sowing Life.

On World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation: Pope Leo said, "It is not yet too late to change course and redirect what has been used for destruction towards life". He encouraged Christians to embrace ecological conversion, transform destruction into life, and renew their commitment to caring for creation and the poor.

On the Kenscoff massacre in Haiti: Pope Leo XIV condemned the August 23-24 massacre in the hills on the outskirts of the capital Port-au-Prince, where 47 people were killed, and 22 were wounded, while more than 50 others were reportedly kidnapped. Many children were among the victims.

On the Nepal Floods: The Pope sent financial support to Caritas Nepal, through the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, for relief operations to continue, as the death toll in the affected regions rises hourly, with over 630 known to have died and approximately 3,000 still missing.

Thought for the Week: The Stork.

Finding that cranes were destroying his newly sown corn, a farmer set a net in his field one evening to catch the destructive birds. When he went to examine the net the next morning, he found of cranes also a stork.

"Release me, I beseech you," cried the stork, "for I have eaten none of your corn, nor have I done you any harm. I am a poor innocent stork, as you may see — a most dutiful bird; I honour my father and mother."

But the farmer cut him short. "All this may be true enough, I dare say, but I have caught you with those who were destroying my crops, and you must suffer with the company in which you are found.

The lesson from the catch: Birds of a feather flock together? Being in the company of evil doers at the crime scene may be assumed as one condoning evil. Or it may appear that the evil is approved.

QnQ? Q asks: Are the Beatitudes relevant for today? How can they be applied for in current times?

Pope Francis proposed this as part of six "new Beatitudes" for the modern Christian during his homily for All Saints' Day in Malmö, Sweden on November 1, 2016. The Pope introduced these modern extensions to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to encourage believers to confront contemporary troubles and anxieties with evangelical love and spiritual energy.

"Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others, and forgive them from their heart;

"Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised, and show them their closeness;

"Blessed are those who see God in every person, and strive to make others also discover Him;

"Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home;

"Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort to help others;

"Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians."

The Spirit @ work: "If you want to know the Creator, look at creation." ***St Columban***

Something to tickle you: True progress always stems from a heart open to others, an intelligence willing to listen, and a will that seeks what unites rather than what separates. ***Magnifica Humanitas, 15***

Bishop Bernard Paul

A warm welcome to the family of faith

PETALING JAYA: The Church of the Assumption was filled with joy as over 400 people gathered for the 2026 Mass for Neophytes on August 25. Among them were 186 newly baptised Catholics and 62 others who had been received into full communion with the Church, accompanied by family members, friends and RCIA catechists who had journeyed with them in faith.

This meaningful event has been held annually in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur since 2019. It provides the newly baptised the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist with the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur.

Most Rev Julian Leow Beng Kim, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, presided over the Eucharistic Celebration, which was animated by members of the parish community of the Church of the Assumption. The collaborative efforts of the choirs from the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Church of St Francis Xavier and Church of St Ignatius together with the Church of the Assumption, helped create a sense of solemnity for the occasion.

In his homily, reflecting on the Gospel passage of Jesus denouncing the scribes and Pharisees, Archbishop Julian said that God rewards all His children equally, as everyone is called to be faithful from the very beginning until their last breath. He emphasised that we should pray for one another and be grateful for God's gifts, especially the gift of faith and salvation. There is a place in heaven reserved for us, but we need to reconfirm it and claim it by practising mercy and good faith, without neglecting others.

The archbishop also added that we should always say "yes" to God and choose Him in our daily lives through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Eucharist that strengthens us, the Anointing of the Sick, and good works — cleaning the inside of the cup and dish first so that the outside may become clean as well. He also urged the newly baptised to continue deepening their faith and exhorted them not to waste energy trying to predict the day when Jesus will return. Instead, they should concentrate on always being prepared to answer God's call. "Every morning is a new day God has given us to live our life to the fullest, to tell the story of Jesus," said Archbishop Julian.

Before the final blessing was imparted, testimonies of personal spiritual journeys were shared by neophytes in four languages: Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin, and Tamil. In conclusion, the archbishop emphasised that it was not our work to convert; we are to spread the Good News, and it is the Holy Spirit who effects conversion.

After the Mass, the neophytes were invited to commemorate the occasion with a group photo, and then everyone adjourned to Dewan Volle for refreshments. The 'Meet & Greet' between the different RCIA cohorts saw enthusiastic participation, with bonds renewed and strengthened through shared experiences.

The Mass for the Neophytes was also the first time that many newly baptised had the opportunity to meet those from other parishes. For them, these connections were instantaneous, eye-opening, and very encouraging. The general opinion was that more such events should be organised, as they encourage the newly baptised to become part of a new community while helping the Church community understand and embrace its newest members.

RCIA Coordinating Team





Young voices sing of faith and love for Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: On the eve of Merdeka Day, the children of the Cherubim Choir at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Setapak, offered their voices in joyful service to Christ while celebrating the diversity and unity of Malaysia.

The children animated the Mass on August 30 with enthusiasm and devotion, participating wholeheartedly throughout the liturgy. Fr Mitchel Anthony presided over the celebration.

Clarissa Micheal and Venoza Mbriyana led the congregation in the Responsorial Psalm, while Jayden Raphael William and Abigail Valentyn Kevin proclaimed the Prayer of the Faithful. Their intentions remembered Malaysia, the leaders of the Church and nation, and those affected by the recent natural disaster in Nepal.

Isabelle Maya Raymond served as commentator, while pianist Cedric Michael accompanied the choir. Christian Duvan later led the congregation in reciting the *Rukun Negara* and singing the national anthem.

Adding colour and meaning to the celebration, the children came dressed in traditional attire representing Malaysia's different cultures. Their presence offered a simple but powerful reminder that diversity becomes a source of beauty when it is embraced with respect, harmony and friendship.

Through their singing, prayer and participation, the children showed that no one is too young to serve the Church or contribute to the life of the nation. Their gifts, offered with sincerity and joy, became a witness of faith and an expression of love for Malaysia.

The parish congratulated the children and the Cherubim Choir for their dedication and encouraged them to continue using their talents to serve Christ, inspire others and bring joy wherever they go. **Jessica Edward Nathan**



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Notifications and Updates

1. Month of September — Season of Creation
As we join the Universal Church in observing and celebrating the Season of Creation in the month of September, let us give thanks for the wondrous gift of God's creation and renew our commitment to care for our common home. Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, may we embrace our responsibility as stewards of creation, and through our daily choices, strive to protect, nurture and preserve the earth, entrusted to us by our loving Creator.

2. Clergy Annual Retreat 2026
I invite you to join me and all the clergy in prayer as we prepare for our annual retreats in this month. Wishing all clergy a fruitful and grace-filled retreat throughout the month of September 2026.

3. Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026
The Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026 is the first national pastoral gathering of the Catholic Church in Malaysia. It brought together bishops, priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful from all nine dioceses across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

Seventy-eight delegates represented us from the Diocese of Penang headed, by me. It is a time for the Church to gather in prayer, listening to one another and discerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the future pastoral mission of the Church in Malaysia.

4. Establishment of the Samaritan Missionaries of Hope Ministry
The blessing of Rumah Kebajikan Samaritan Hope to be an instrument of mercy, compassion and hope, was officially launched on September 8, 2026.

5. Diocesan Coordinating Team of the Flame of Love Movement in the Diocese of Penang
Following up from their inaugural AGM held recently, I am pleased to share the Diocesan Coordinating Team for this ministry. Wishing God's blessings and guidance in their mission for their term of office.
Diocesan Coordinator – Patricia Chin
Secretary - Felicity Felicia Goh
Treasurer – Yogeetha Rajar
Committee Member – Esther Ooi
Committee Member - Lenie Nagarajan
Spiritual Advisor - Sr Mercie Lai, FMDM

6. 112 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Sunday, September 27, 2026
As we observe the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, may the message of Pope Leo XIV's, "Even just one of these children" (cf. Mt 18:5), remind us of our Christian responsibility to welcome, protect and accompany migrants and refugees, especially children and those who are most vulnerable. May our Diocese continue to be a welcoming Church, where every person is received with dignity, compassion and fraternity. *https://shorturl.at/jNI9X*

7. Rev Fr Anthony Liew
Rev Fr Anthony Liew has been appointed Priest in Residence to assist the administrator, Sr. Angela Wong at the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima of the Holy Rosary, Kota Bahru, from September 1 - December 31, 2026.

We welcome him back to the Diocese of Penang after concluding his studies in Rome and wish him God's blessings in his new mission in Kota Bahru, Kelantan.

8. Rev Fr Desmond Jansen
Rev Fr Desmond Jansen has been appointed as assistant head of Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue (EIRD) with effect from September 1, 2026, assisting Arokiadass Anthonysamy, the head of EIRD.

We thank and pray for Fr Desmond Jansen as he takes on this new role and responsibility in assisting this ministry in the Diocese of Penang.

9. Ozanam Retirement Village (ORV), Taiping, Perak
Sharing the contact details of Ozanam Retirement Village (ORV), along with its Vincentian Philosophy and Pastoral Care. *https://shorturl.at/pCWJm*

10. Deacon Richard Wilson, Church of the Divine Mercy, Sg Ara, Penang
Deacon Richard Wilson will conclude his service at the parish of Divine Mercy, Sg. Ara, Penang on August 31, 2026.

He will now take up employment at Simee Home for the Aged, Ipoh while, remaining available in his Diaconal Ministry in the Deanery of Perak.

Sebastian Francis

Cardinal Sebastian Francis

Parents urged to connect before they correct

PENANG: Parents seeking to guide their teenagers must first build a relationship in which they feel heard and understood, participants at a recent family workshop were told.

"Connection before correction" was the central message of *Parenting Teens: Navigating the Teen Years Together,* an interactive workshop held on August 23 at the Msgr Aloysius Spirituality Centre.

Supported jointly by the Penang Diocesan Family Life Commission (PDFLC) and Good Shepherd Counselling Services, the programme brought together parents, adult family members, seminarians and teenagers. Separate but simultaneous sessions for adults and teens included discussions, role-playing exercises and shared learning experiences aimed at strengthening communication within families.

The parent session was facilitated by consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist Dato' Dr Lai Fong Hwa and certified Mental Health First Aid instructor Datin Indranee Liew.

They highlighted active listening as an essential part of parenting teenagers and encouraged parents to establish an emotional connection before turning immediately to discipline or correction.

The facilitators also offered a balanced perspective on technology and its place in family life. Rather than labelling screen time as entirely good or bad, they encouraged parents to consider what activity, interaction or relationship it might be replacing.

Running concurrently, the teen session was facilitated by Catherine Teoh, a licensed and registered counsellor. She guided the young participants in exploring how social media could affect their self-worth, emotions and relationships.

Through discussions and practical scenarios involving social media and screen use, the teenagers reflected on social comparison, their online experiences and the pressures they sometimes encountered. They were encouraged to recognise their emotions, identify what could help them in difficult situations and practise communicating their needs to others.

The session also introduced practical ways of managing digital habits and creating space for meaningful activities and relationships away from screens.

Participants appreciated the relatable examples and practical strategies, which they said could be applied to everyday family life. Parents also expressed interest in future workshops on executive-function skills, stress management, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships and trauma-informed care.

The workshop highlighted that closing the generation gap does not begin with parents having all the right answers. It begins when parents and teenagers are willing to listen, understand and navigate the challenges of growing up together.

For information on future workshops and PDFLC programmes, contact @pdflc or @yncheah via WhatsApp.

Mercy, not judgement, guides St Jude prison ministry

RAWANG: Prison Ministry volunteers at the Church of St Jude renewed their commitment to serve persons in prison with compassion, respect and dignity during a commissioning Mass on August 23.

The volunteers pledged to recognise Christ in every person they encountered, remain faithful witnesses of the Gospel, support one another and persevere when the ministry became difficult.

The Prison Ministry at St Jude began with a small group of parishioners serving alongside the Catholic Prison Fellowship Association (CPFA). Supported by the parish priests, including Fr Surain Durai Raj, the early volunteers laid the foundation for a ministry rooted in prayer, compassion and respect for human dignity.

In September 2023, Fr Vincent Thomas initiated the ministry's formal establishment in the parish. Parishioners underwent the required induction programme to become volunteers, while existing members renewed their permits to visit prisons and correctional institutions.

Under the guidance of Fr Jonathan Rao, the ministry received its largest intake in 2025, when 11 new male volunteers came forward. This brought its membership to 17 volunteers in 2026.

They currently conduct pastoral outreach at prisons in Kajang, Sungai Buloh, Seremban and Bentong, as well as Pusat Integrasi Mantin and the Puncak Alam Rehabilitation Centre.

Their work includes pastoral visits, prayer and spiritual formation, Lenten intercessions,



Christmas and Easter celebrations, a letter-writing initiative involving Confirmation candidates, a mother-and-child project and a jogathon fundraiser.

Working with the St Jude Parish Integral Human Development Ministry, the volunteers also assist families affected by imprisonment, recognising that incarceration affects not only individuals but also their spouses, children, parents and other loved ones.

The ministry also collaborated with the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development to prepare pre-loved clothing and essential items for parolees and to host a Majlis *Iftar* in March 2026.

The volunteers animated the Sunday Mass, during which Fr Simon Labrooy reflected on a ministry founded on compassion rather than judgement.

He reminded the congregation that people should not be defined solely by their past mistakes, as every person remained deserving of dignity, mercy and love.

Reflecting on Peter's profession of faith in Matthew 16:13–20, Fr Simon said Christians were called not only to proclaim Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God", but also to demonstrate that faith through the way they received and accompanied others.

He encouraged the faithful to look beyond judgement and recognise the presence of Christ in those who were imprisoned. Prison ministry volunteers, he added, were called to listen, offer hope, provide accompaniment and trust in God's power to transform every human heart.

Fr Simon then led the Prayer of Blessing over the volunteers, asking the Holy Spirit to grant them wisdom, patience, courage and love. Through the intercession of St Maximilian Kolbe, patron saint of prisoners, he prayed that they would remain faithful to their mission and become instruments of God's mercy and peace.

The celebration also featured an exhibition by Jabatan Penjara Malaysia, handicrafts made by persons in correctional institutions, and a food sale organised by residents of Second Chance Community Home, together with ministry members.

The exhibition offered parishioners an insight into rehabilitation and the importance of community support in helping former prisoners rebuild their lives. The handicrafts highlighted the skills, creativity and personal development of those undergoing rehabilitation, while parishioners' support for the sales provided a practical expression of solidarity.

The activities showed how the Church, correctional authorities and the wider community could work together to promote rehabilitation, reconciliation and reintegration.

Audrey Freeman, honorary president of the CPFA in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, was also present, reflecting the continuing partnership between CPFA and the St Jude Prison Ministry.

Inspired by Christ's words, "I was in prison, and you visited Me" (Matthew 25:36), the ministry seeks to help St Jude become a welcoming parish that opens doors to forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and new beginnings.

The parish expressed its gratitude to the priests, volunteers, benefactors, parishioners, prison personnel and ministry partners who supported its mission. It also remembered the late Charles Savarimuthu and others whose faithful service helped establish the ministry.

MJD Counselling ministry open day

PLENTONG: The Malacca Johore Diocese Counselling Ministry (MJDCM) held its first diocesan-level Open Day recently at MAJODI Centre. The family-themed event aimed to strengthen relationships, improve communication skills and encourage greater self-awareness through shared and hands-on learning experiences.

In his opening speech, Bishop Bernard Paul welcomed participants of different age groups and commended them for taking the time to listen and learn. In his speech, he shared a story about a Pepsi-Cola CEO who asked employees what was most important to them. Many placed Work at the top of their list. The CEO then described life as juggling five balls; four made of glass representing faith, family, health, and friends. The last ball, made of rubber, represented work. If one of the glass balls were dropped, it could crack or break and be difficult to restore. The rubber ball, however, would simply bounce back. In the same way, a lost job could be replaced, while relationships, health and faith were far more fragile.





The highlight of the event was the keynote session by Dr Nicole Chen, a seasoned counsellor with more than two decades of experience specialising in family and couples' therapy. Through an interactive and engaging session, Dr Nicole introduced participants to five attachment patterns that develop within families from early childhood and explained how they can influence relationships and emotional wellbeing later in life. Drawing from her own relationship with her mother, she also shared how these experiences had shaped her behaviour. Participants explored how children's personalities are formed, the different ways people communicate, the challenges that can arise from these communication styles, and why people develop certain behavioural and emotional responses.

After lunch, parallel sessions were held for youth, young adults, Mandarin-speaking parents and English-speaking parents. Youth and young adults took part in activities designed to deepen their understanding of their personalities and help them reflect on themselves as students and as they mature into young adults. Dr Nicole led a workshop for Mandarin-speaking parents on parenting in the modern world and building stronger relationships with their children. Michael Bay, a licensed counsellor in Johor Bahru, conducted another workshop on the importance of parental self-care in the modern family. He highlighted how caring for parents' own wellbeing can contribute to raising healthy, resilient, and emotionally intelligent children.

For some participants, the event was a therapeutic experience. For others, it offered practical lessons in communication between parents and children. For many, it was also an opportunity for self-reflection. **Diana Gomez & Christie Emelda**

Prepare with a heart full of love

Bob Ho

PETALING JAYA: Preparing for death with faith and care can be the final act of love that gives families peace of mind, said Fr Lawrence Ng CDD, rector of the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord Formation House.

Speaking at a recent talk titled *Preparation to Meet Our Lord* at the Church of St Ignatius, Fr Lawrence said love involved not only being present to one's family, but also preparing a path of peace for them.

"Love is not only about being with our families, but also about preparing a path of peace for them so that our passing does not become a burden," he said.

Practical preparation includes clearly communicating one's wishes, helping family members understand how to fulfil them and keeping important documents, including baptismal certificates, properly organised. This would reduce the confusion and stress loved ones might otherwise face after a death.

"Communicate clearly so that loved ones are not left with regrets, and the family can be at peace," he said.

Fr Lawrence added that the legacy a person leaves should not be limited to money, property or possessions. Faith, love, forgiveness and blessings were of greater and lasting value.

"True wealth is not what is seen, but what remains in the heart forever," he said.

He encouraged participants, particularly elderly Catholics who were the only Catholics in their families, to speak openly about their faith and religious wishes. This would enable their loved ones to help them complete their earthly journey in accordance with their Catholic faith.



Participants listening attentively to Fr Lawrence Ng CDD.

Spiritual preparation, he said, includes receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation to experience God's mercy and make peace with Him; the Anointing of the Sick for healing, strength and courage; and Holy Communion or Viaticum, the Bread of Eternal Life for those nearing the end of life. Families could also request a priest to provide prayer and spiritual accompaniment.

True preparation involves the body, heart and spirit, Fr Lawrence explained. Caring for the body means cherishing one's health, using time wisely and living purposefully. Preparing the heart calls for healing and reconciliation with oneself, others and God. Preparing the spirit means deepening one's relationship with God and looking towards eternal life.

Reminding the faithful that death does not have the final word, he said Christians were journeying towards God, the resurrection and a face-to-face encounter with Christ, who declared: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Fr Lawrence also highlighted an increasingly important but often overlooked matter: one's digital legacy. Personal data, mobile devices, email and social media accounts, online subscriptions and digital assets should be included in end-of-life planning.

Participants were encouraged to decide who should have access to these accounts, which accounts should be deactivated and where important digital information could be found. Family members should also know how to access a person's phone and locate emergency contacts when necessary.

At the conclusion of the two-hour session, Fr Lawrence shared simple forms that participants could use to record information concerning their faith, family, medical and end-of-life wishes, legal preparations and personal messages to loved ones.

He delivered the talk twice — first in Mandarin for members of the Chinese Apostolate and later in English. The sessions were organised by BECCOT (Mandarin), with support from the Family Life Ministry, BECCOT (English) and the parish Funeral Team.

Palliative care practitioners and educators Dr Lalitha Jeyasingam and Dr Carol Lim also introduced participants to care for people living with serious illness. They explained that palliative care focuses on comfort, support and quality of life, while hospice care is a particular form of palliative care for those approaching the final stage of life.

Dr Lalitha spoke during the English session, while Dr Lim addressed the Mandarin-speaking participants. Both volunteer with Assisi Palliative Care (ASPAC), a non-profit organisation providing free hospice-at-home services from its base in Petaling Jaya.

Founded in 2015, ASPAC supports patients and their families through a team that includes doctors, nurses, a counsellor and volunteers. Patients are accepted following a referral from their attending doctor.

Its work seeks to help people live with dignity and hope while coping with serious illness and loss through medical, spiritual and psychosocial support. Further information is available at *https://aspac.my/*



Elders assured of their treasured place in the Church



Fr George Harrison anointing the elderly.

SHAH ALAM: Grandparents and elderly parishioners took centre stage at the Church of the Divine Mercy (CDM) as the Golden Elders Ministry (GEM) brought together some 155 participants for a celebration honouring their faith, wisdom and presence in the Church community.

Held on August 26 in conjunction with the Sixth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, the gathering reflected the theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV, *"I will never forget you" (Isaiah 49:15).*

The celebration began with a Holy Hour, followed by the Anointing of the Sick administered by Fr George Harrison and the celebration of Mass. Participants later gathered for a fellowship lunch, music and entertainment, sharing an afternoon marked by prayer, companionship and joy.

Beyond providing an opportunity for fellowship, the event sought to assure elderly parishioners that they remained valued members of the Church family and had not been forgotten.

For Alice Chia, the celebration had a noticeable effect on her mother-in-law, particularly after she received the Anointing of the Sick.

"She looked much better and less stressed," Alice said. After Mass, her mother-in-law chose to remain for lunch and appeared peaceful, although she did not speak much with the others. On seeing an image of the Divine Mercy, she also cheerfully remarked that Jesus looked "so cute and so young".

Alice thanked the GEM team for regularly checking on her family and said she hoped to bring her mother-in-law to future gatherings.

Another participant, Casey Kesavan, described the Mass as prayerful and spiritually uplifting. He said the good turnout, fellowship, food and entertainment contributed to a genuine sense of "joy, faith, friendship and community".

Dr Jennifer Wee similarly expressed appreciation for the Anointing of the Sick and the support extended by the parish's various ministries.

The GEM team thanked Fr George and members of the Liturgy, Media, Music and Hospitality ministries for their support in organising the celebration.

Through initiatives such as this, the ministry hopes to strengthen pastoral care for grandparents and elderly parishioners, ensuring that they remain connected to parish life and recognised for the experience, faith and wisdom they continue to offer the community.

Raymond Paul



Catholics called to regenerate hope for creation

Claire Westwood

SINGAPORE: *REGENERATE!* entered its second year with the launch of the Season of Creation 2026 by the Episcopal Commission for Creation Justice of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (ECCJ-MSB) during Mass at the Church of St Alphonsus on August 30.

Cardinal William Goh of Singapore was the main celebrant, with Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibu, president of ECCJ-MSB, concelebrating. Representatives of Creation Justice Commissions from the region's 11 dioceses also took part in the entrance procession, carrying their respective diocesan banners.

The theme for the second year of *REGENERATE!* is *Regenerate Hope for Land Ecosystems*, highlighting the need to care for forests, grasslands, deserts, peatlands and wetlands, as well as urban and rural settlements.

REGENERATE!, also known as PROTEC 2.0, is the second phase of the commission's *Protect Our Earth, Protect Our Children* campaign, which ran from 2020 to 2025. The new five-year campaign runs from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2030, with a different creation-related theme each year.

While the original PROTEC campaign was promoted only in Malaysia, *REGENERATE!* has been endorsed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei for implementation across all dioceses in the three countries.

The Season of Creation 2026, observed from September 1 to October 4, carries the theme *Living Water,* inspired by Ezekiel 47:1–12. The ecumenical observance begins with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, instituted by Pope Francis in 2015.

In his homily, Cardinal William reflected on integral ecology, a key theme of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. He reminded the faithful of their responsibility as stewards of creation and urged them to place that duty above convenience and self-interest.

Bishop Joseph later explained the themes of both campaigns, emphasising that caring for creation embraces people and all living creatures. He called on the faithful to move from being "ego-centred" to "eco-centred", noting that renewal lies at the heart of the Catholic faith.

The Mass coincided with the ECCJ-MSB General Meeting, held from August 28 to 30 at the St Francis Xavier Retreat Centre. Around 30 diocesan delegates attended the gathering.

Four Singapore-based speakers — Assoc Prof Janice Lee, Prof Adrian Loo, Michael Leong and Fr Colin Tan SJ — addressed the regeneration of land ecosystems and the spirituality of justice for creation. The gathering was hosted by the Care for Creation team of Caritas Singapore.

Parishes and Catholic institutions across Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are encouraged to participate in both campaigns. *REGENERATE!* resources are available at *https://bit.ly/4qWMgaq*, while Season of Creation materials can be found at *seasonofcreation.org*.

LRT, laughter and *Laudato Si'*



KUALA LUMPUR: What if caring for our common home could begin with a train ride, a few puzzles and plenty of laughter?

That was the spirit of the Creation Justice Ministry (CJM) *Green Hunt KL 2026,* which brought together 116 participants in 33 teams on August 25 for a day of discovery, environmental awareness, fellowship and friendly competition.

Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si',* the *Green Hunt* transformed environmental education into an adventure through the streets, public transport system and communities of Kuala Lumpur.

It showed that ecological conversion does not always begin with a grand campaign. Sometimes it begins by slowing down, paying attention and looking at familiar surroundings with fresh eyes.

The event was the culmination of months of preparation by the Creation Justice Ministry and 30 volunteers. They managed checkpoints, ensured participants' safety, judged challenges, marked answers and kept teams moving along the route. They also prepared breakfast and lunch, creating opportunities for fellowship before and after the Hunt.

The day began at the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Brickfields, where participants gathered for breakfast and received a briefing.

Archbishop Julian Leow blessed the participants before flagging them off — but he did not remain on the sidelines. He joined the Hunt, showing that care for creation is a shared responsibility in which everyone can participate. His team eventually finished in fifth place.

From Brickfields, the teams travelled across Kuala Lumpur, including an LRT journey from KL Sentral towards Kelana Jaya, before continuing to St Ignatius Church and other locations.

Along the way, participants tackled questions, puzzles and tasks that tested their observation, creativity, knowledge, teamwork and ability to think laterally.

The challenges encouraged them to notice details they might ordinarily overlook and discover how everyday surroundings could offer lessons about sustainability, creation and humanity's responsibility towards the planet.

The *Green Hunt* brought that message to life. It connected people across generations and communities, renewed friendships and created new ones. Participants learnt, competed, collaborated and celebrated together.

The organisers ensured that the prizes honoured participation and team spirit as well as speed and accuracy. The top 10 teams received prizes, while special awards recognised the youngest participant, the "youngest-in-reverse", the most sporting and best-dressed teams, the last team to arrive and even the team with the funniest answers.

The success of the event was made possible through the support of Archbishop Julian, Fr Andrew, the Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry core team, marshals, markers, volunteers and those working quietly behind the scenes.

The organisers also expressed their appreciation to the 116 participants who embraced the Hunt with enthusiasm, curiosity and an openness to learn.

By the end of the day, one question was repeatedly heard: "When is the next *Green Hunt*?"

Perhaps that was the clearest indication that the event had achieved something meaningful. Participants did not leave merely with prizes, photographs or tired feet, but with a renewed awareness that creation is a gift entrusted to everyone.

The real challenge begins after the Hunt: carrying what was learnt into homes, workplaces, parishes and communities through daily choices that respect the earth and those who share it. **Mark Suresh**

Stained-glass windows bring Gospel to life in Kampar

KAMPAR: Sunlight streaming through 11 newly installed stained-glass windows greeted parishioners as the Church of the Sacred Heart reopened following two-and-a-half months of renovation.

The church marked its reopening and blessing with Mass on August 31, coinciding with Malaysia's 69th National Day. The congregation included parishioners, guests and benefactors, many dressed in traditional attire for the double celebration.

Parish priest, Fr Simon Anand, presided at the Mass, concelebrated by Fr James Pitchay of Tapah and Fr Anthony Liew, who recently returned from Rome. Bro Clement Lee assisted.

The church building had been temporarily closed since mid-June for the installation of the stained-glass windows and a wall-mounted air-conditioning system.

Before Mass, Fr Simon blessed the new holy water and the four stained-glass windows behind the sanctuary. Fr James and Fr Anthony then sprinkled the congregation and church with holy water.



Fr Simon Anand blessing the stained-glass windows.

In his homily, Fr Simon described the 11 windows as "sermons in colour and light", explaining that stained glass had historically been used to teach and inspire people who could not read or write.

Although literacy is widespread today, he said, stained glass continues to offer an important spiritual lesson. It receives sunlight and transmits it in different colours, reflecting how the parish and society comprise people of diverse backgrounds, including locals and migrants.

"We are different, but we are one people of God," he said. "Regardless of race or language, God gives us light."

The true measure of the windows' beauty, he added, was whether those who looked upon them allowed God's light to shine through their own lives.

Three windows depicting the Most Holy Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — were installed at the highest points above the church's two wings and main entrance. Fr Simon said they reminded the faithful that God is their beginning, centre and final destiny.

Another four windows depict mysteries of the Rosary: the Visitation, the Agony in the Garden, the Baptism of the Lord and the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Together, they invite the faithful to contemplate the life of Christ, who became human, suffered, died and rose for humanity's salvation.

The four windows behind the sanctuary represent the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Fr Simon explained that although each Gospel has its own character, all four point to Jesus Christ.

He reminded the congregation that some people may never read the Bible or enter a church, but they will encounter Christians and judge the Gospel through the way believers speak, forgive and treat the poor, the migrants and others around them.

"The Gospel proclaims Christ through words, but we are called to proclaim Christ through our lives and actions," he said.

Fr Simon concluded that "the most beautiful stained glass is not in the church but in human life", expressing the hope that everyone who entered the renewed church would encounter Christ and be touched by God's presence.

After Mass, he thanked the benefactors and parishioners whose generosity made the renovation possible and invited everyone to a fellowship lunch at the adjacent Mercy Hall.

Those present received a polished wooden block bearing a commemorative sticker. The souvenirs were fashioned from wooden window panels removed during the renovation and blessed as reminders that the Church belongs to all the faithful and remains open to everyone. **Bernard Anthony**

Get closer to God through Christian meditation



Fr Joseph Stephen CSsR

Anita Matthews

IPOH: Christian meditation, rooted in the contemplative traditions of the early Church, is drawing renewed interest as people seek silence and spiritual grounding in an increasingly hyperconnected world. This was reflected in the participation of over 80 people at an introductory workshop held at the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMPH) on August 31.



Rapt attention during the intro to meditation workshop at OMPH.

Opening the one-day workshop, parish priest, Fr Joseph Stephen CSsR, highlighted the richness of the Church's spiritual traditions and the many ways of encountering God.

"This introductory workshop is an opportunity to understand the history of Christian meditation, correct misconceptions about the different traditions and learn how to 'still' the wandering mind," he said.

Fr Joseph emphasised that meditation is a form of prayer requiring commitment and intentionality. Referring to St Teresa of Avila, who struggled for 27 years before turning wholeheartedly to God, he said choosing meditation meant honouring the time set aside for it by putting aside distractions.

He also recalled that Fr Laurence Freeman OSB, director of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), conducted a similar workshop at OMPH in 2000. The interest it generated has continued through the parish's weekly Saturday morning meditation sessions.

WCCM Malaysia national coordinator, Beth Rozario, explained that no single tradition holds exclusive rights to meditation and that the practice is deeply rooted in Scripture. Drawing on Psalm 37:7, which calls believers to be still and wait for God, she traced the practice to the early Desert Fathers, including theologian John Cassian, who taught the repetition of a short prayer phrase.

This ancient tradition was revived in 1969 by Fr John Main, who introduced the repetition of a mantra as a way of entering silence and stillness.

"Meditation is, therefore, not a new practice, but part of a rich spiritual heritage that calls us to become still, listen deeply and rest in God," Beth said.

WCCM Malaysia school coordinator, Roland Victor, spoke about discipleship and overcoming distractions to listen more deeply to the Holy Spirit. He encouraged participants to turn their attention away from worries, achievements and self-preoccupation towards God.

"Christian meditation is not about losing ourselves. It is about letting go of the ego to become more open to God's presence, love and guidance," he explained.

Participants experienced meditation, took part in a contemplative walk and listened to personal testimonies from Mally Arokiasamy and Stella Vincent of the Church of St Francis of Assisi (SFA), Cheras.

Mally, who experienced depression following her father's death 27 years ago, later discovered Christian meditation and joined the group at SFA before becoming its leader. She now facilitates WCCM Malaysia's weekly online meditation sessions.

"The fruits of meditation did not appear while I sat in silence. Rather, the silence shaped my relationships, gradually transformed my character and helped me find joy in living. I am glad I was introduced to meditation," she said.

Stella expressed her joy at seeing many young RCIA neophytes from SFA begin practising meditation. "That is a powerful acknowledgement that the Holy Spirit is working within us," she said.

Christian meditation is practised in parishes and groups throughout Malaysia. The WCCM team is available to introduce this ancient Christian spirituality to parishes upon request. For further information or to arrange a session, email *wccm.malaysia@gmail.com* or visit *wccmmalaysia.org*.

New places, deeper faith, stronger friendships

KULIM: Members of the Sacred Heart Seniors group in Kulim returned spiritually renewed and enriched by a five-day pilgrimage to Kuching in mid-August, a journey that brought together prayer, cultural discovery and joyful fellowship.

At the heart of the pilgrimage were visits to several significant places of worship. The group toured the Church of St Peter, prayed together at the Cathedral of St Joseph, and visited the iconic Mt Hosanna Chapel.

A particularly meaningful encounter took place at St Peter's College Major Seminary, where the seniors met seminarians Brothers Leon, Joe and Melvin. Their warm exchange offered an opportunity for conversation, mutual encouragement and prayer, adding a special spiritual dimension to the journey.

The pilgrimage also introduced the group to Sarawak's rich cultural heritage. At the Borneo Cultures Museum and Sarawak Cultural Village, they gained a deeper appreciation of the state's diverse traditions, architecture and cultural expressions.

An evening cruise along the Sarawak River gave the seniors time to unwind and enjoy Kuching's picturesque waterfront. Visits to local markets and shopping areas also allowed them to sample Sarawakian delicacies and browse regional handicrafts.

Throughout the five days, shared prayer, meals, laughter and new experiences drew the pilgrims closer to one another. The journey offered them space to step away from their daily routines, encounter God in unfamiliar surroundings and rediscover the joy of travelling together as a community of faith.

They returned to Kulim carrying not only souvenirs and photographs, but also renewed spiritual vigour, treasured memories and friendships strengthened along the way.

For the Sacred Heart Seniors, the pilgrimage was a reminder that every stage of life offers fresh opportunities to encounter God, discover something new and walk alongside one another in faith. **Agnes Teh Nyuk Moy**



Resting in God, renewed for the journey



NEGERI SEMBILAN: Fifty-two retreatants gathered at Millennia Village near Seremban for a weekend of prayer, reflection and fellowship under the spiritual guidance of Fr Colin Tan SJ.

Surrounded by a tranquil lake, gardens and a striking granite outcrop, participants, comprising members of the legal fraternity, reflected on Scripture through four sessions centred on God's love and the retreat's themes of rest, revival and survival.

The retreat began with an ice-breaking session and the celebration of the Eucharist. Fr Colin then invited participants to ponder several questions: How do we pray? What graces do we hope to carry into the next day? How do we read Scripture in the Ignatian tradition? How do we truly rest in the Lord?

These questions set the tone for the weekend, encouraging participants to slow down, listen, and become more attentive to God's presence. The evening ended with fellowship among friends.

The second day began with a hike. This was followed by praise and worship and Mass.

Fr Colin then guided participants through an examination of conscience in the context of rest, revival and survival. He explained that true rest is holistic, embracing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of life.

Later, participants received a deceptively simple invitation: take a cup of tea and retreat into nature. They were asked to reflect on the question, "What is empty in our cup?"

Drawing on the writings of Joyce Rupp, Fr Colin reminded them: "If I wait until all the flaws, chips and cracks disappear, I will be the cup that stands on the shelf and is never used."

The image of the imperfect yet useful cup invited participants to recognise that God does not wait for people to become flawless before working through them. As they walked around the lake, orchard and garden, they were encouraged to listen quietly to the Lord and allow Him to speak through the beauty and stillness of creation.

A subsequent session focused on survival in Christ. The words of Jesus in Mark 4:39–40 — "Quiet! Be still! … Do you still have no faith?"— served as a reminder that Christ remains present even amid life's storms.

Fr Colin stressed that no one survives alone. Like the disciples in the boat, Christians are sustained by Christ and by the community of faith — living in Him, through Him and for Him.

Each retreatant then received a companion card bearing a word and a Scripture passage for the journey ahead. The words included "rest", "gentleness" and "soar". The day's reflections concluded with prayer and Adoration.

After the silence came celebration: a barbecue dinner and karaoke session brought together participants for an evening of laughter and fellowship.

On the final morning, retreatants began the day with a hike, swim, or workout before joining in praise and worship.

In his concluding session, Fr Colin invited participants to identify a particular grace they wished to carry home. During Mass, they presented leaves, flowers and even rocks collected during their contemplative walk as symbols of the fruits of their retreat and in response to the Gospel of the day.

The weekend ended with an examen, as participants looked back on the graces they had received before saying their farewells.

The society's upcoming Dinner and Dance will be held on October 17 at Hee Lai Ton Restaurant in Petaling Jaya. Those interested in future Catholic Lawyers' Society activities may contact the society for further information.

Church must listen before it decides

BANGKOK: Synodality must not remain confined to documents and meetings but become a lived way of listening, discerning and carrying out the Church's mission, national synodal teams from across Asia were told at a three-day gathering in Bangkok.

Held from September 1 to 3 at the Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Training Centre, the meeting brought together representatives from 21 countries to consider how synodality could take root within bishops' conferences, dioceses, parishes, seminaries and pastoral councils.

Archbishop Peter Soon-Taick Chung of Seoul said the publication of the Synod's Final Document in 2024 marked an important stage, but not the end of the journey.

"A synod cannot end with a document," he said. It must renew relationships, attitudes, decision-making and the life of the Church.

A synodal Church, Archbishop Chung explained, listens before deciding, seeks to understand before judging, and prays and discerns before reaching conclusions. This requires personal conversion as well as a transformation in how authority is exercised and people relate to one another.

He also called for greater transparency and accountability, saying decisions should be accompanied by clear explanations of why and how they were reached. Without such openness, misunderstandings can grow into distrust and weaken communion among bishops, priests and parishioners.

Synodal listening, he added, is not about preparing a counter-argument while another person is speaking, imposing one's opinion or defeating someone in discussion. It requires openness to what the Holy Spirit may be saying through others — especially the lonely, the wounded and those who have left the Church.

Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, Vice-President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, said national synodal teams should not become another layer of authority or bureaucracy. Their role is to animate, facilitate and accompany local Churches.



After a three-day conference in Bangkok from September 1–3, national synodal team members from across Asia pledge to carry home a renewed commitment to advancing the synodal journey.

National teams need the support of their bishops' conferences, just as diocesan teams require the cooperation of their bishops and parish initiatives need the backing of diocesan structures, he said.

The aim is not to create additional work, but to help the Church undertake its existing mission in a more participatory and discerning manner. Synodality should be integrated into parish programmes, diocesan assemblies and pastoral planning rather than treated as another activity competing for time and resources.

Participants were challenged to identify one practical step they could undertake within the next six months. Suggestions included introducing synodal formation in seminaries, providing continuing formation for priests and strengthening the participation of pastoral councils.

National teams were also encouraged to begin by asking dioceses what they hoped to achieve, where they were struggling and how listening, participation and shared responsibility could help. Instead of arriving with additional targets, the teams should offer assistance shaped by the needs of each local Church.

Undergirding all these efforts, Bishop John Saw Yaw Han of Myanmar said, must be prayer.

"Prayer and synod go together," he said, acknowledging that resistance, fatigue and discouragement may arise along the journey. Such difficulties can reveal human limitations while deepening the Church's reliance on the Holy Spirit.

He urged synodal teams to remain attentive to those in need and to venture beyond communities where their message is readily accepted. Healing received from Christ, he said, must always lead to service.

As the gathering concluded, delegates spoke of returning home with renewed confidence and a deeper understanding of synodality as a spiritual way of life.

Their shared conviction was clear: synodality will become credible only when it changes how the Church listens, makes decisions, exercises authority and walks with those at the margins.

The challenge now is to carry what was experienced in Bangkok into the daily life and mission of every local Church. **RVA**

Nepal floods expose deep climate injustice

KATHMANDU: Caritas Nepal is expanding its emergency response following devastating flash floods in the Rasuwa district that reportedly killed more than 1,100 people and left nearly 5,000 missing.

Heavy rain, mud and damaged roads have hampered efforts to reach affected communities. One Caritas team took about 18 hours to reach Nuwakot because of devastated infrastructure.

Despite the difficult conditions, Caritas Nepal has supplied ready-to-eat meals to community kitchens in more than 50 locations. It has also provided emergency shelter and essential household items to 1,000 families, together with sanitation and hygiene kits, solar lighting and charging facilities.

The organisation is preparing to expand its assistance to 4,000 families.

Caritas Nepal Executive Director Sr Cecilia Durga Shrestha said teams were focused on "feeding displaced families, working hand in hand with our local emergency partners, networks and disaster management committees".

Arpana Karki, Programme Coordinator for Caritas Nepal's Disaster Management Department, said some communities had fled to higher ground and were staying with host families.

"Reaching them is extremely difficult, while food supplies are running out," she said.

In several areas, helicopters — already in high demand and limited in number — remain the only means of delivering assistance.

Caritas is also preparing longer-term support, including rent assistance, debris clearance, temporary learning spaces for children and livelihood recovery. Its staff have identified 56 orphaned children in overcrowded shelters and offered to relocate them to safer places while their communities rebuild.



A drone view shows people walking on a mud-covered road next to damaged houses in Devighat, Nepal, following deadly flash floods and mudslides. (OSV News Photo/Athit Perawongmetha, Reuters)

Caritas Internationalis said the disaster exposed a profound climate injustice.

"Nepal contributes less than 0.1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet its Himalayan communities are facing increasingly dangerous climate-related risks," Sr Cecilia said in a message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The floods were triggered when a glacial lake dam collapsed, releasing water, ice and debris into the Bhote Koshi River. Scientists have warned that rising temperatures are increasing instability across the Himalayas.

Caritas Internationalis Secretary General Alistair Dutton said those who had contributed least to global emissions were often among the worst affected by the climate crisis.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have died or are suffering as a result," he said.

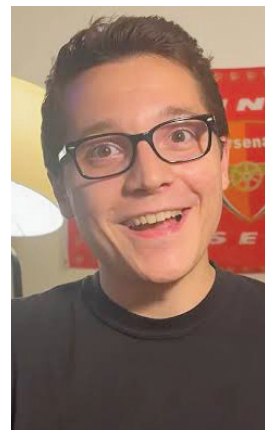
Pointing also to the extreme heat experienced across Europe, Dutton urged the international community to confront the growing crisis.

"We must all face the climate chaos that is so evident all around us and commit to do what is necessary to care for our common home," he said.

He warned that failing to address climate change would have devastating consequences, particularly for vulnerable communities such as those in Nepal.

Dutton called on countries that had benefited from carbon-based energy systems to "step up and accept our responsibility for the chaos and harm that we are now seeing in every corner of the globe". **Vatican News**

Popular agnostic YouTuber returns to Catholic faith



PRINCETON, New Jersey: "Big news. God exists. Christ is Lord, and he established the Catholic Church."

With those words, Joe Schmid — known online for critically examining arguments for God's existence — announced his return to Catholicism on his YouTube channel, *Majesty of Reason,* on August 21.

The announcement came as a surprise to many of his 55,000 subscribers. For years, Schmid had openly identified as an agnostic while exploring philosophy, religion, metaphysics, ethics and the arguments for and against belief in God.

Raised Catholic, Schmid became an atheist in high school, partly because he struggled with the philosophical problem of animal suffering. He later embraced agnosticism, beginning what he described as an "arduous conversion process" that lasted about a decade.

Schmid launched *Majesty of Reason* in April 2020, producing lectures, interviews and debates with philosophers, theologians and Christian apologists. Critiquing arguments for God's existence was among the channel's central focuses.

A fourth-year doctoral candidate in philosophy at Princeton University, Schmid told *EWTN News* that his return to the faith "wasn't my own making".

"Conversion is a gift of God's grace, and I've seen its transformative impact in my life," he said. "So God is ultimately what led me to Catholicism."

Intellectually, Schmid said a "huge confluence of factors" gradually convinced him of the truth of the Catholic faith. These included philosophical arguments for God's existence and what he called "vindicatory miracles" — miracles that affirm distinctively Catholic teachings.

He cited the charisms of Padre Pio, healings at Lourdes, the apparitions of Our Lady of Fátima and Eucharistic miracles among the evidence that influenced his journey.

"I converted after a long process of working through my many objections to Catholicism and appreciating the many powerful arguments in its favour," he said.

In his announcement, Schmid described his return as the culmination of both "head factors and heart factors".

"God is good," he told viewers.

The Aquinas Institute, Princeton's Catholic campus ministry, welcomed the announcement and asked the Catholic community to pray for Schmid as he grows in his faith and begins a new chapter in his public work.

Catholic apologist Trent Horn, who recently interviewed Schmid, described him as "one of my smartest critics" and praised the intellectual rigour he brought to their philosophical and theological discussions.

Schmid said he intends to continue *Majesty of Reason,* now placing his work at the service of the Catholic faith. Debates and discussions will continue, he assured viewers, although he asked for patience as the channel undergoes this transition.

"We will see where the Lord takes me," he said.

"And I also ask for your prayers. Know that I will be praying for you." **EWTN News**

Pope's prayer intention for September

For the care of water: What kind of people are we becoming?





Prayer Prism

Fr Fabian Dicom

We turn on the tap, and water comes. We hardly think about it. It is there when we wake up, when we shower, when we cook, when we wash, when we are thirsty. We expect it to be there tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. Perhaps that is the problem. We have become so accustomed to water that we have forgotten what it means.

Water is not simply another thing we consume. It is what makes life possible. And yet we waste it, pollute it and increasingly compete for it. Some have too little; others use far more than they need. What appears to us as an endless flow from the tap may, for someone else, mean drought, hunger or a struggle for survival.

That is why the Pope's prayer intention for September deserves more attention than it might first suggest: ***"For the care of water."*** He asks us to pray *"for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it."*

The question is no longer, "Do we have enough water?" It is more uncomfortable: ***"What are we doing with the water that has been entrusted to us — and who is being left without it?"***

These were some of the questions I had in mind when I recently spoke with Charles Santiago, a Malaysian economist, human rights advocate, and former politician who has worked extensively on water governance and public policy. What he said challenged my own understanding of the problem. ***"Our water problem is not simply that we don't have water… our problem is recycling and using water most efficiently and sustainably."***

Perhaps that is where we should begin. Our water problem is not only about whether we have enough water. It is also about whether we have learned to value what we already have.

Charles reminds us that access to water is fundamentally a human right. Water is not simply another commodity. It is necessary for life itself. This is also where the Church begins. *Laudato Si'* says that access to safe drinking water is a "basic and universal human right" because it is essential for human survival. Pope Francis also speaks of the "grave social debt" owed to the poor who lack access to drinking water.

This is not only a concern of the Church. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly recognised "the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights." The UN further describes the right to water as access to water that is "sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable."

We see the product, but not the water

Malaysia may appear to have abundant water, but that abundance can be deceptive.



File photo of residents filling their pails with water following the water disruption in the Klang Valley in 2020. (Malay Mail/Shafwan Zaidon)

Much of our drinking water comes from rivers, while those rivers face pollution, development, industrial activity, waste and deforestation. Climate change is also bringing more unpredictable rainfall and periods of drought.

But Charles made another point which I found particularly revealing: "Everything that we do… the buildings that we sit in, the clothes that we wear, the shoes that we use, and the food that we eat, all of them have water in it."

We see the product, but we do not see the water.

Even something as ordinary as a cup of coffee carries a hidden water footprint. Charles mentioned the estimate of about 140 litres of water behind a single cup. The precise figure is less important than the realisation that water is hidden behind so much of what we consume.

Perhaps this is part of our spiritual problem. We have become disconnected from the sources of life that sustain us. This happens when water is treated merely as a physical commodity rather than ***a sacred gift and an essential bond of life.*** Viewing water through a purely material lens disconnects human beings from the moral and ethical responsibilities tied to sharing, preserving, and respecting Earth's most vital resource.

For the Bible, water is never just water.

From the very beginning, water is woven into the story of creation and life.... In Genesis, before human beings appear, the Spirit of God is already hovering over the waters. Isaiah cries, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the water." The psalmist speaks of God leading us beside still waters. Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at a well and speaks of "living water". And Revelation ends with the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God.

Water is not incidental to the biblical story. ***Water is one of Scripture's great images of life itself.***

Justice asks: enough water for whom?

The Pope's intention contains two important words: ***just and sustainable.***

Sustainability asks, *Will there be enough water tomorrow?* Justice asks, *Enough water for whom?*

A child without clean water, a farmer facing drought, a community whose river has been polluted, or a family unable to afford safe water is not experiencing merely an environmental problem. It is a question of human dignity.

Pope Francis puts the connection between rights and responsibility very simply: ***"Our right to water is also a duty regarding water."***

If water is a human right, then we have a responsibility to protect it — not only for ourselves, but for others and for generations yet to come. This responsibility belongs to governments and industries, but it also reaches our homes and our daily habits.

Charles also points to how much water we use. Malaysians consume, on average, about 201 litres of water per person each day — well above the 165 litres per person per day used as a UN benchmark.

Numbers like these can sound distant until we bring them home. How long do we spend in the shower? How often do we wash our cars? How much water do we use simply because it is there? When water is always available, it is easy to forget its value.

Charles's message is not that we should stop using water. It is that we should stop wasting it. As he puts it, ***"We have to save every drop of water that's coming down."***

That is not merely a practical instruction. It is a change of attitude.

What are we consuming?

Our rivers are not simply pipes from which we extract water. They are living ecosystems. When we pollute them or destroy the forests and wetlands that sustain them, we damage the very systems upon which our own lives depend. ***Care for water cannot be separated from care for creation.***

But there are new pressures we need to recognise. Charles describes data centres as ***"water guzzlers."*** Even our digital lives have a water footprint. When we ask ChatGPT a question or use another AI tool, it may feel as though everything happens invisibly on a screen. But behind that simple question are data centres, servers, electricity and cooling systems that require water. ***Our digital lives are not waterless.***

The question is not whether technology is good or bad. It is whether, in our pursuit of progress, we have stopped asking what our progress consumes.

Development is necessary, but it raises an important question: what are we consuming in the process, and who will bear the cost when the limits of nature are ignored? If development today leaves polluted rivers, depleted water sources and greater insecurity for the poor and for future generations, then we have to ask whether it is really development.

The good news is that we are not without solutions. Rainwater harvesting, recycling and reclaimed water, better infrastructure, and stronger protection of our rivers, forests and wetlands can all make a difference. The challenge is not simply knowing what can be done, but having the ***wisdom and political will to do it.***

What can the Church do?

Our parishes can begin with simple questions: How much water do we use? Can we harvest rainwater or reuse water for gardens and cleaning? Can our schools and communities learn where our water comes from and what is happening to our rivers?

But the Church can do more than teach people to turn off a tap. ***We can help people recover a sense of water as gift, not something simply there for our use.*** What we receive as a gift carries a responsibility to others and to those who come after us.

That is why prayer matters. We are not praying simply for water to keep flowing from our taps. ***We are praying to become more conscious of what we have been given, how we use it, and whether others have enough.*** Prayer should open our eyes and move us towards responsibility.

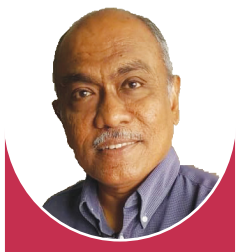
Charles reminds us that we already know many of the solutions. The challenge is whether we have the will to act before scarcity forces us to.

So, when we pray this month, perhaps we should hear the prayer differently. We are not simply asking God to keep the water flowing. ***We are asking for the wisdom and courage to make sure that it flows — for everyone.***

Charles Santiago is a Malaysian economist, human-rights advocate and former Member of Parliament, currently Co-Chair of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) and Director of Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN). He is also a former Chairman of Malaysia's National Water Services Commission (SPAN) and has been a longstanding advocate for water justice and accountable water governance.

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

The catechetical task of the family



Echoing the Faith

Dr Steven Selvaraju

In the previous article, I examined the educational task of the family. I mentioned that a key task of the family is to serve life. An important way parents accomplish this is by providing education to their children. This includes religious education, which, in the Catholic Church, is commonly known as "catechesis". As stated in earlier articles, catechesis cannot be confined to the parish; it has to take place at home as well. In this article, we will examine the family as both the agent and the context of catechesis.

The Family as the First School of Social Living

The document *Familiaris Consortio (*FC) states that, "The family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs" (FC, 37). Parents are called to create an atmosphere in the family that is filled with love and reverence for God and others in order to foster holistic personal and social development in their children.

At the same time, the family is the first and fundamental "community of love". According to Pope Francis, the family is "the primary setting where we first learn to relate with others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one," as well as "how to live alongside others who are worthy of our concern, our kindness and our affection" (*Amoris Laetitia* (AL), 274).

Pope Francis also stated that the family is the "first school of human values," since "most people learn basic attitudes and values in childhood which become so deeply rooted that they remain throughout life" (AL, 274). In this regard, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA), the Vatican II document on the laity, points out the importance of parents educating their children about God's love for people outside the family. Parents are to teach their children, by their own example, to have concern for their neighbours (AA, 30).

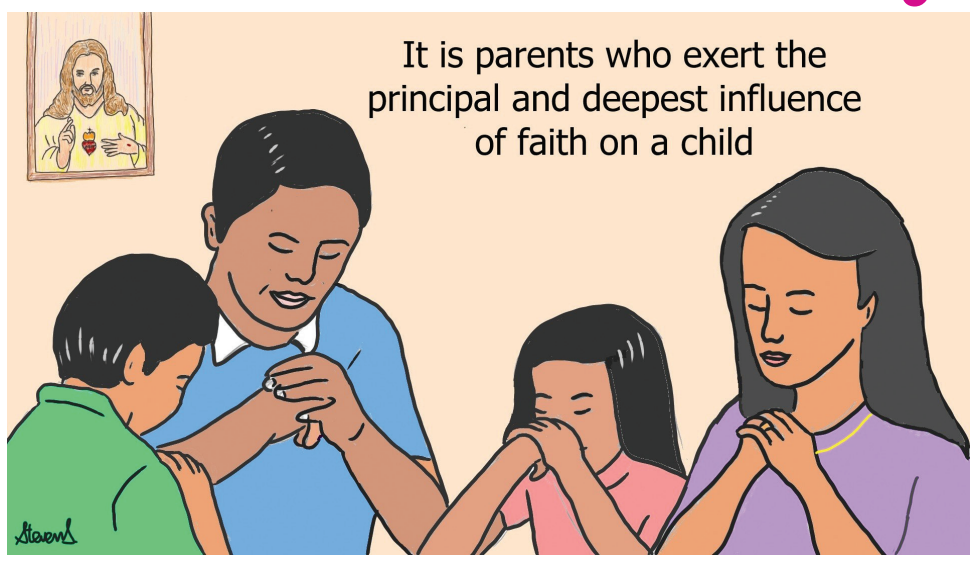
The Family as the First Setting for Catechesis

Church documents also emphasise that it is in the family that a child first learns about the Christian faith. For example, *Familiaris Consortio* states that the family is "the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her, through a progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity" (FC, 2).

The General Catechetical Directory (GCD) highlights the fact that in Christian families, "the first months and years are of the greatest importance for a person's equilibrium and in a believing family they can provide the outlines of a Christian personality" (GCD, 78). From then on, states the Directory, the child "…assimilates by a sort of osmosis the behaviour patterns and attitudes of the members of its family. The consequent accumulation of experiences will provide the foundation for the life of faith which will gradually develop and find expression" (GDC, 78).

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) for its part points out that the family, as a context for catechesis, has the unique privilege of transmitting the Gospel by grounding it in profound human values. The family therefore, provides the first "classroom" for a child's faith formation, "where the awakening of the sense of God, the first steps in prayer, education of the moral conscience, and formation in the Christian understanding of human love and sexuality take place" (GDC, 255).

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis writes that it is in the family that faith is first handed down to the younger generation. The home is where the first catechism lessons are taught and learned. Despite current lifestyles, work demands, and the complexity of today's world, the Pope stressed that "the home must continue to be the place where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray, and to serve our neighbour" (AL, 287).



Parents as First Catechists

All of this emphasises the role of parents as the primary catechists of their children. It is they who exert the principal and deepest spiritual influence on a child. According to the *Directory for Catechesis* (DC), "Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life" (DC, 226).

Parents are the first heralds of the Gospel as well. They hand on the faith to their children and educate them in it "through the witness of their daily Christian life" (AA, 11). The *Directory for Catechesis* states that parents, through their daily example, have the most effective capacity to transmit the beauty of the faith to their children (DC, 124).

Similarly, *Catechesi Tradendae* (CT) stresses that parents participate in catechising their children by showing them how to help each other grow in faith through "the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words…" It highlights the irreplaceable role of parents in catechesis by mentioning that, "There cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for this ministry by being their own children's catechists and to carry it out with tireless zeal" (CT, 68).

According to the GDC, catechesis in the family is further deepened when parents take seriously the more methodical catechesis their children receive in the parish and help them appropriate it. It adds, "Christian parents must strive to follow and repeat, within the setting of family life, the more methodical teaching received elsewhere". Therefore, "Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches all forms of catechesis" (GDC, 226).

Conclusion

The responsibility to educate means that Christian parents should present to their children all the teachings necessary for the gradual maturing of their personality from a Christian and ecclesial point of view. They must show their children the profound significance to which the faith and love of Jesus Christ can lead. Furthermore, their awareness that the Lord is entrusting them with the growth of a child of God should inspire and prompt Christian parents in this task.

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

'Season of Creation' – everything and everyone is connected!



Making a Difference

Tony Magliano

About 1,600 years ago, the brilliant Doctor of the Church, St Ambrose, admonished those of wealth who clung to their sense of entitlement: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich."

With these prophetic words, St Ambrose eloquently highlighted and linked together the Catholic Social Teaching principles known today as the "preferential concern for the poor and vulnerable," the "common good," and the "care for creation."

In the first encyclical letter dedicated to the environment in the history of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis voiced similar concerns to those of St Ambrose. In his letter titled *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* – a must-read – Pope Francis warned: "When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected."

Yes, everything is connected! We have no time to waste in recognising, healing, and strengthening these connections.

And there's no better time to begin than now, during this "Season of Creation" which runs from September 1 to October 4 – the feast of St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology (see: *https://seasonofcreation.org/*).

More than ever before, much of our planet, and many of our brothers and sisters, are greatly suffering.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation, the past 11 years have been the warmest on record, and ocean temperatures continue heating up with no end in sight (see: *https://shorturl.at/qz2Rt*).

Global hunger, starvation, and thirst are worsening because of numerous ongoing armed conflicts, corporate greed, extremely inadequate governmental responses, and overall individual indifference. And global warming due mostly to human-induced climate change, is seriously contributing to this hunger, starvation, and thirst crisis throughout so much of the world.

According to Oxfam, climate change has caused more intense and frequent heat waves, intense droughts and floods with the number of disasters increasing five-fold over the past 50 years.

Oxfam cites that the wealthy "G20 countries are among the most polluting nations in the world, collectively responsible for nearly 77 per cent of carbon emissions. This dwarfs emissions from the 10 countries most impacted by climate change which is 0.1 per cent."

Oxfam stresses our individual and governmental need to urge the G20 leaders to drastically cut emissions and justly compensate poor nations – 18 days of fossil fuel companies' profit could cover the entire UN humanitarian appeal for an entire year!

Furthermore, Oxfam prophetically states: "It is extraordinary that as humanity faces this existential crisis, there is still more incentive to destroy our planet than to save it" (see: *https://www.oxfam.org/en/climate-hunger*).

Pope Leo, in his September 1, 2026 message for the 11th "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation" leads with the challenging Scripture from Isaiah: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

The Holy Father explains, "The prophet Isaiah spoke of a time when nations 'shall beat their swords into ploughshares' (Is 2:4), transforming what destroys life into what sustains it. But today, we too often witness the very opposite, as efforts continue to be directed toward violence and war …

"The wounds of war and the degradation of the earth, then, are profoundly linked to the condition of the human heart. The conflicts that torment humanity are in many ways the outward expression of interior discord and division. When the heart is distorted, relationships suffer, and the structures we build begin to reflect that disorder …

"To build a peaceful society, therefore, we must not only reform structures but also renew our hearts."

Please take time, both individually and as a community, to read and reflect on Pope Leo's inspiring message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (*https://bit.ly/4ydY3na*).

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.*

A filmmaker for Christ

Christina Lazaroo



Would you be my filmmaker? Those were the words imprinted on the heart of Linus Jeremiah Koh, founder of Saint Max Story & Media and country lead for *The Chosen* Singapore. A filmmaker by profession, Linus is a husband and father of six who has dedicated his work to media evangelisation through film, storytelling and digital media. But Linus' story as a Catholic digital missionary began long before cameras, films and social media. It began with his mother, and with a decision that would ultimately shape the course of his life.

A life entrusted to God

Growing up in a low-income family, Linus' mother, then a newly baptised Catholic, became pregnant with him and realised she could not afford to raise another child. On the way to hospital for an abortion, she stopped at the grotto at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, where she entrusted her unborn child to Mary.

There, she encountered Fr Michael Arro, MEP, who asked her what she was going to do. When she told him she could not afford a third child, he replied, "If you cannot afford this baby, then God can. Give this baby to the Lord and the Lord will take care of this baby." Holding on to those words, his mother raised him and eventually encouraged him to become a priest, while his father used his artistic gifts to paint Jesus, Mary and Gospel stories on polystyrene foam. As Linus grew older, he began to wonder how his own gifts could serve the Church.

The answer came into sharper focus when he was 17. While reading a book on leadership, he came across the words, *leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.* At that moment, he looked up at the television and saw a news ticker describing television as "the world's greatest influence on culture today."

For Linus, if media could influence culture, perhaps it could also be used to bring people towards Christ.

"I have a lot of priests, but I don't have enough filmmakers. So would you be my filmmaker?" he felt God asking him.

By 17, he had made his decision: "I want to be God's filmmaker."

From rebellion to vocation

The path to that vocation, however, was anything but straightforward.

As a teenager, Linus rebelled and was eventually expelled from a Catholic secondary school. Later, he and a friend got into serious trouble after beating up the younger brother of their altar-server leader. Though he expected to be expelled from the altar servers, the leader instead asked him to become a leader of the altar servers.

For Linus, it was an unexpected grace from God. From there he began serving weekday Masses and, through the Eucharist and Sacrament of Reconciliation, slowly developed a deeper intimacy with God. The faith he had once resisted became personal.

Linus also had a passion for inline skating. Performing backflips and grinding rails taught him to take risks and accept the possibility of falling.

"If we don't jump, we will never know whether we can land. So, just jump first and take the chance," he said.

His willingness to take a leap shapes his approach to filmmaking and faith.

Linus studied film and television in Australia before returning to Singapore, where he entered the commercial creative industry and worked with major brands. Yet over time, he felt something was missing.

Commercial filmmaking, he said, "felt like chasing the wind".

His desire to use film for a greater purpose had already surfaced during his student years. He had made a Christian short war film inspired by the Book of James titled, "Hath No Man". Designed as a circular film and teaching tool, it went on to win 27 film festival awards. For Linus, it was a personal challenge to tell a compelling story while carrying a biblical message.

"I didn't want to spend my whole life just trying to sell things for people," he reflects. He wanted filmmaking to bring joy, purpose and truth. And for Linus, there was no greater story to tell than the Gospel.

"The greatest story ever told is the story of Christ. The story of sacrifice."

Where media meets mission

That conviction eventually led Linus and his wife, Anne Marie, to establish *Saint Max Story & Media.* Named after St Maximilian Kolbe, a media evangelist who used the printing press and dreamed of establishing a film studio, Saint Max is more than a production company. For Linus, it is a media apostolate using filmmaking, livestreaming, social media and emerging technologies to communicate the Catholic faith.

Its giraffe logo captures the spirit of that mission. Inspired by Bishop Enrique of Battambang, the giraffe represents having a big heart for God, His people and the poor; seeing from a higher perspective; and gently leading others away from darkness towards life and hope. Its four feet on the ground remind Linus and his team to remain humble and grounded in prayer.

That mission became especially clear when COVID-19 hit Singapore. After public Masses were suspended in 2020, Saint Max offered its services to the Archdiocese of Singapore and recorded its first online Mass the following day.

What began as an urgent response grew into livestreaming Masses, children's liturgies, special celebrations and perpetual adoration.

Yet Linus believes Catholic media does not always have to be explicitly religious. Stories can carry Christian values through themes of love, sacrifice, forgiveness and human dignity, opening hearts to deeper questions about faith. Some who joined Saint Max simply because they loved media eventually encountered testimonies of faith, with some later entering RCIA.

Saint Max began with just SGD 200 and often operated month to month. When the company once faced a SGD 20,000 shortfall, someone unexpectedly gave them a cheque for exactly that amount.

"I just sat there with the cheque and I cried. And I just knew that my Lord is living. My Lord is real," Linus said.

For him, Saint Max is an experience of the five loaves and two fish: offering what little he has and trusting God to multiply it.

The Chosen: from screen to Scripture

Seven years into the Saint Max journey, Linus became involved with T*he Chosen Singapore,* the global series created by Dallas Jenkins and produced by 5&2 Studios. The series has reached more than 350-million people around the world and been translated into 125 languages.

As Country Lead, Linus works to bring the series beyond the screen and into the lives of people in Singapore. Through the *Come and See Foundation*, Linus also helps provide resources that use *The Chosen* as a springboard for Scripture, conversation and evangelisation.

For Linus, its evangelising potential lies in reaching someone who may never walk into a church but might nevertheless sit down to watch an episode about Jesus. He recalled a friend of Hindu religion who watched the first five seasons twice before speaking with him about Jesus. Another woman initially contacted *The Chosen* only to ask when the next season would arrive. During the conversation, she was introduced to the "book" on which the series is based: the Bible. She bought one, began asking questions and connected with a Christian community. Two months later, she sent Linus a photograph of her baptism.

But Linus is careful to distinguish the series from Scripture. "*The Chosen* is not Scripture. *The Chosen* is not the Bible." It is a biblical historical drama that uses creative interpretation around the Gospel narratives, with the hope of leading viewers towards Scripture itself.

And that, he believes, is where the Church must step in. "The content can exist, but if we don't turn into a movement, if we don't bring people into a community and into the Church where they can experience love and learn more about Christ, then we are missing something."

Evangelisation, therefore, does not always have to begin with "Come to church". It could begin with a simple, "Would you like to watch an episode with me?" Linus calls this a *low-friction evangelising mechanism*: watch together, talk, allow questions to emerge, open Scripture and, eventually, invite people into community and sacramental life. The content is not the destination. It is the doorway.

Communication builds communion

For Linus, the Church has no shortage of stories, but often struggles to communicate them.

That is why Catholic communicators should not be treated as an afterthought. A story about a parish ministry, a family's experience of faith or someone who has found hope through suffering can reach far beyond the people who witnessed it first-hand.

Communication does more than inform; it allows one part of the Church to discover another, and in doing so, builds communion.

The responsibility does not rest solely on priests. Linus recognises that clergy already carry enormous pastoral and administrative responsibilities, and may not always feel comfortable with media. Instead, he challenges lay Catholics to step forward. Filmmakers, photographers, musicians, artists, writers and social media creators all have something to offer.

He asks: what if stories of healing, suffering, second chances and faith were shared more widely? What if media could move someone to compassion, generosity or greater trust in God? In Asia, he believes the Church has an opportunity to raise the standard of Catholic media by using the gifts already present among its people.

In an increasingly digital world, particularly as artificial intelligence makes falsehoods harder to recognise, the Church needs people willing to communicate truth.

"Truth is not merely information. Truth is a person. Truth is Jesus Himself."

Many languages, one face

In Malaysia, Linus sees diversity as an opportunity for evangelisation. The Church speaks English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, Tamil and numerous dialects, with each community bringing its own culture and expression of faith. Rather than seeing these differences as obstacles, he likens them to a stained-glass window: different colours and shapes coming together to form one image.

"That picture is the face of Jesus."

For Linus, this makes the stories of Malaysia's Catholic communities worth telling and preserving, from missionaries and religious to families, conversions, sacrifices and everyday acts of faith. "We use the servant to glorify the Master," he said. The camera and the storyteller are only instruments. The mission is to point people towards Christ.

Choosing love over fear

For those called to digital evangelisation, Linus' message is simple: do not be afraid. Evangelisation is not about forcing faith on people, but creating opportunities for them to encounter Christ.

"So, I urge us to choose the path of love and don't be afraid to let people know Who true love is."

He cautions against rushing people's journeys. "Don't microwave that person. Marinate that person with who true love is." The missionary throws the net; the Holy Spirit does the rest.

In a noisy digital world, Linus believes the Church can simply keep putting light into the darkness, one story and one encounter at a time.

For Linus, it all comes back to the question that first took root in his heart: "Would you be my filmmaker?"

What my nephew and godson taught me about God's love



Word Made Flesh

Nicholas Lye

My two-year-old nephew would not play with me initially. Whenever I tried to engage with him during my weekly visits to my mom and dad, who look after him during the day, he would ignore me or call out for my mom or dad when they tried to leave him alone with me. At times, he would even refuse to say goodbye to me no matter how my parents tried to urge him to.

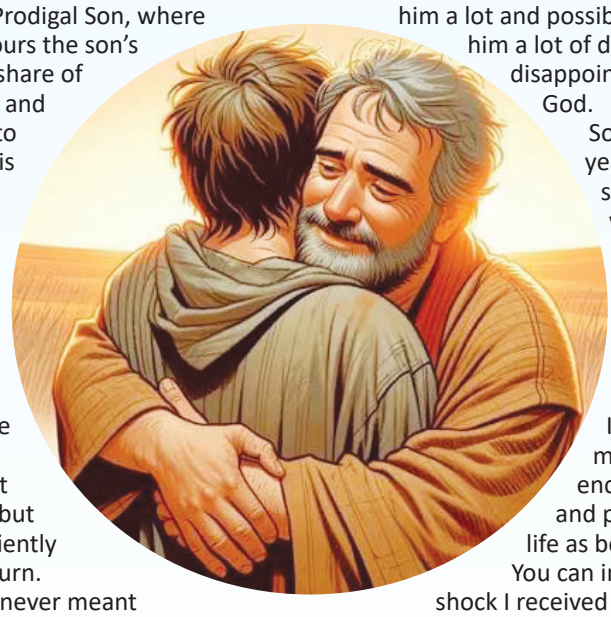
At first, I was a little hurt. I wondered if I had done something wrong, or if I should be doing something more. But I decided not to push it, and to honour his choices and actions.

Still, I continued to reach out to him whenever I got the chance to do so, until one day, he finally let me into his space. He started laughing at some of the things I said, started repeating words I said to him to the surprise of my parents, and eventually was willing to play with me without the presence of my mom or dad.

Recently, as I was about to leave and was saying goodbye to everyone, my nephew just unexpectedly ran up to me on his own to give me a goodbye hug. I was so moved by his gesture and was so glad that I had not given up on him nor myself but allowed time and space and a spirit of honouring to eventually draw us closer together.

As I reflect on this episode, I imagine God reaching out to us and wanting to spend time with us. But for whatever reason, we refuse or reject Him. He does not demand immediate correction nor adherence to His desires. Instead, He honours our choices, yet continues to reach out to us. He offers us space, time and freedom till we feel safe with Him, and choose to spend time with Him, and even embrace Him.

Similarly, we see God's nature in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where the father honours the son's request for his share of his inheritance, and allows the son to leave home. This must certainly have hurt the father, but he too chose to offer space, time and freedom to his son to eventually come to his senses, all the while not giving up hope but still waiting patiently for his son's return.



Perhaps God never meant to impose a "go to church once a week" rule on us, but meant it as an expression of His desire to be with us as often as possible. And instead of demanding or guilt-tripping us into 'obedience', He actually waits patiently to let His genuine love eventually draw us to Him when we are ready.

When one of my godchildren chose to stop going to church at one point in his life during his late teens, I did not try to stop him nor insist that he return to church immediately. Instead, I empathised with his situation, for his parents were separated, and that must have affected him a lot and possibly caused him a lot of doubt or disappointment towards God.

So, year after year, I would simply catch up with him, talk about his life, but never once pressured him to return to church. Instead, I offered my support, encouragement, and presence in his life as best as I could.

You can imagine the shock I received when, almost 15 years later, this same godson one day messaged me to request to see a priest for confession. I later learnt that he had chanced upon a Buddhist video clip talking about aligning one's values to one's life, and that suddenly got him thinking about how his life was far from aligned to his Catholic faith. It was at that point that he suddenly felt drawn to return to church, and he even got his siblings to attend church with him every Sunday. He has since gotten the habit of reading the Bible more frequently and has been receiving much wisdom and encouragement from it.

This has truly shown me how patient and enduring God's love is for us, that no matter how long or how far we stray from Him, He never gives up on us but continues to draw us deeper into His love, while also offering us space, time, and freedom to return to Him of our own choice and conviction.

Through the experiences with my nephew and godson, I am rediscovering God's 'recklessly' permissive, patient, and persevering love for each of us, no matter how far we stray from Him. I am also learning to offer the same patience and gentleness towards myself whenever I fall short of God's ways and am tempted to shame or blame myself for my wayward ways.

Whenever we sometimes choose to reject God or stay away from Him, can we believe that God never blames us, but continues to remain faithful to us, however long it takes for us to feel free and ready to return to Him?

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

Being alone…the solitary life



And in the end…

Marge Martinez

I live alone. It is a state of life shared by many in this city whether by choice or by circumstance. Some have been single all their lives and when their parents pass on, they continue living alone in the family home. Some have lost spouses and may have no children. Or perhaps their children are in homes of their own, either elsewhere in the city or abroad. Adults living alone is a far more common phenomenon these days than in the past I feel. When I was a child the only person, we knew who lived alone was the parish priest!

The lives of Christian hermits or solitaries, as they are sometimes called, fascinate me now that I live alone. I was thrust into my solitude; they made it their life choice. Jesus sought out solitude which was at a high premium in His public ministry. And He often had to surrender it in favour of the crowds. And I now have it in abundance… do I squander it? Christian literature abounds with assertions that solitude is a powerful fuel for spiritual growth. I often wonder if that is true of my years of solitude and if I will have to answer for it on Judgement Day.

Like everything in life, there are positives and negatives of living alone.

A good thing about living alone is you only answer to yourself.
A day stretches before you like a blank canvas for you to do with as you please. There is a wonderful liberation in that. Every decision I make doesn't affect anyone else, I can choose when to wake, when to eat, when to pray, when to sleep. When to do my chores (or not!) when to do my exercises (or not!) when to connect with the outside world (or not!)

A bad thing about living alone is you only answer to yourself.
It is so very easy to become selfishly self-centred. To act as if nothing matters except your little bubble of existence. The world outside recedes into irrelevance and you stop bothering. I mean, the part we older people play in the world is a passive one, surely? People I care about want to live their lives without an elderly person's solicitude hovering over them, right?

And honestly, it takes a gargantuan and unrelenting effort to make your life more about others than about yourself.

A good thing about living alone is there's less opportunity for temptations like judgement, pride, impatience, uncharitable speech and complaints.
Well, it makes sense, doesn't it? There are no day-to-day, face-to-face interactions with anyone. No one to "get on your nerves." Most of these are sins of the tongue anyway, and I am often silent for days on end, aren't I? Because whom do I have to talk to?

The bad thing about living alone is there's more opportunity for temptations like judgement, pride, impatience, uncharitable speech and complaints.
"But hold on, Marge," says my ever-vigilant Guardian Angel, "you do interact via that little thing you hold in the palm of your hand, don't you? And doesn't it become so much easier to react to situations with all of the above?

Remember how impatient you were about that late Shopee delivery? Remember what you said about the grammatical errors in that article you read? Or about the US President? Just because you think and say these things into the ether, with absolutely no repercussions, it doesn't mean you are not responsible for every transgression."

O, mea culpa, mea culpa!

The good thing about living alone is you get to cultivate habits.
I have the habit of always making my bed.

Another good habit is to be fastidious about personal hygiene even though there's no one to bother if you have bad breath!

I have the habit of writing in my journal, a good form of reflection and self-surveillance, I think.

It's also a good habit to check-in with people and to want to keep in touch with friends.

The bad thing about living alone is you get to cultivate habits.
The habit of procrastination. (Why clear that cupboard today when I can do it tomorrow?)

The habit of self-indulgence, especially when it comes to favourite pastimes: reading, word games, watching movies for hours on end with zero perception of the passage of time.

The habit of buying more than I need.

I wonder how the saints handled all this.

And in the end…

My life of solitude alternates between Mount Tabor and Gethsemane.

Sometimes I glimpse the beauty of heaven with longing.

In elation, I breathe, "Lord, it is good for me to be here."

Sometimes I plunge into the fears of advancing age ahead.

In dread I sigh, "Father, Thy Will be done."

Now Mount Tabor, now Gethsemane.

"Lord, my life is one of comfort and peace, for that I thank You.

I thank You for my solitude, and I ask that You would help me use it to become more aware of Your Presence.

Help me see the meaning of my faith, help me connect with the unseen cloud of witnesses, so many of whom lived out their lives in solitude. Help me to trust Your promise that You would always be with me.

And Lord, I realise that as long as You leave me here, there is something You would have me do.

Show me, Lord, every day, and help me to do it. Amen."

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



Fr Gerard Theraviam

Beyond MPC2026 — *A delegate dreams...*

Over the last couple of weeks, parishioners of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist have come to pray before the *Salib* for MPC2026, as it made its final stop before being transported to Sibu to be part of the composite *Salib,* combining all the hope and prayers of all nine dioceses. It has been very beautiful to see the earnestness and creativity of the different groups as well as individuals who have come to pray for the Malaysian Church and I am personally encouraged, knowing that we go forth not just as 800+ delegates, but with the prayerful backing of all God's people in Malaysia who have been praying for this convention in the last couple of years as the various *salibs* made their way through villages, towns and cities.

By the time you read this MPC2026 will be in progress or just concluded. It will be time for us delegates to return to our respective dioceses and begin the work of translating all the hopes and aspirations into actual manageable actions.

As I write this, I look back over the years, having participated in many large meetings in our church – some of them have left me with great hope and resolve to change and make a difference. The reality is that sometimes, not all we hope for actually comes to fruition. What can happen is that the big words and slogans can remain at the level of ideals. The hard slog to unpack, communicate, and apply our findings to the life of a parish or BEC sometimes isn't accomplished, and the average parishioner is oblivious to the call of the Spirit for the Church. Yes, it is hard to move such a giant body. Often, it's a problem of ineffective communication to all sectors of the church, compounded by the fact that many Sunday mass-goers aren't overly interested in more than "pay, pray, and obey! Sometimes, despite our good intentions, we lose steam along the way, faced with so many demands that demand our attention.

So what are my hopes for this convention (and beyond – in all our interactions!)?

- Firstly, that every one of us delegates will come open to the power of the Spirit working in and through each other. That we might listen to each other with openness to what the other is saying (and not saying!)
- That the Convention will be conducted in a spirit of prayer and contemplation, open to discerning the voice of the Spirit of Jesus. After all, we are trying to listen to God's voice and direction.
- Furthermore, that everyone would have the courage to say it as it is – even if the truth is hard my opinion is going to be unpopular. That we might be able to speak openly without fear of being ridiculed or judged, because my opinion might have resonance in the heart of others and assure them to also speak up.
- That we will not be dominated by anyone's loud voice and opinions who try to steer everyone in a particular direction, but that all may share freely and openly with the knowledge that their views are respected and listened to.
- That we might be able to agree to disagree on issues and that it will not affect our relationships – to be able to see the difference between persons and issues.
- That the consensus might be easily picked up by the organising committee and sub-committees who will not try to steer anything towards a preconceived desired result but be completely open to our God of Surprises.

I am particularly looking forward to this convention because it involves all the dioceses, most especially those of Sabah and Sarawak. It is good that in these recent times, there has been a commitment to working and growing together as a Malaysian church, especially with the reality of geographical mobility, resulting in many Sabahans and Sarawakians living among us in Semenanjung. Thankfully, nowadays our seminarians are trained together – all the better for national integration. Slowly, the Church on this side of the waters is learning to embrace our sisters and brothers from *'the other side',* together with many migrants and others as part of the local Church, enriching us with their gifts and culture – becoming truly Malaysian.

Also, the fact that the number of the laity far outweighs the number of religious and clergy is encouraging. The *Aggiornamento* in 1976 was an entirely 'clergy affair' but increasingly both the religious and laity have been recognised as genuine partners in church-building. I pray that the laity will indeed not merely follow the shepherds but use their voice and be heard, for surely the Spirit is not confined to those ordained or in consecrated life!

I am sure that the themes of Church, Society, Family (and Youth) as well as Environment will be highlighted by the programme as that has rightfully been our focus in recent times, but I hope there will be an openness to other pastoral realities that catch our attention for action. Enough of merely regurgitating the 'same old, same old' without being open to new vistas the Spirit is leading us towards.

I pray too that we will be creative in our implementation – continuing with what works well and has ongoing value, but also be open to what else might work alongside. Let us not have knee-jerk reactions but contemplatively and carefully discern our next steps.

So as I take my flight to Sibu this week, I go forward enthusiastically, with hope and expectation – to meet fellow Catholics who love the Church, to listen with them and to come back, charged with enthusiasm and grit to get working to continue to 'walk the talk' – to communicate and share the findings of MPC2026. Then together we will have to be concrete in our living out of what the Spirit is saying and MOVE. Let us not create more documents after all the 'hot air' but create practical, doable actions that will have an impact on all our sisters and brothers. We will constantly have to review and adjust our rudders. The task is not easy but God always provides the graces necessary.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Fr Gerard Theraviam *has been a seminary formator and is currently the parish priest of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Kuala Lumpur. He also serves in Worldwide Marriage Encounter and is the Spiritual Director of the World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM) in Malaysia.*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Towards an understanding of suicide

Every year I try to write an article on suicide because it is perhaps the most misunderstood of all deaths, and it wreaks a unique havoc among the family and the loved ones left behind.

They are left with a blizzard of ambivalent and conflicting feelings: shame *(What a shameful way to die);* guilt *(Somehow, I should have done more);* second-guessing *(Why wasn't I more attentive?);* anger *(This was an act of selfishness);* and anxiety *(How can this person go to heaven?)* Moreover, in effect, this ruins the memory of the person who died by suicide.

Throughout my articles on suicide and my book *(Bruised & Wounded: Struggling to Understand Suicide)* I have tried to emphasise that in most cases of suicide:

- We are dealing with an extremely sensitive and wounded person, someone who, at one level, is too bruised to touch.
- In suicide, a person dies against his or her will, akin to jumping out of a high-rise window because your clothing is on fire.
- A death by suicide is the emotional and psychological equivalent of cancer, stroke, or heart-attack. For this reason, we no longer use the verb "committed" suicide since we never say that someone committed cancer, or a stroke, or a heart-attack. Suicide in most cases is not a voluntary act.
- In many cases too, suicidal depression has a biochemical root.
- We need not worry about that person's eternal salvation. He or she had a good heart, and God reads the heart. Sometimes a person can descend into a state into which the best of human love, medicine, and psychiatry can no longer reach, but faith assures us that there is no depressive hell that God cannot descend into and breathe out peace.
- We need to permit ourselves to feel all the ambivalent feelings we will have about our loved one and his or her manner of death. That's a healthy grieving process that should not be short-circuited. Eventually the memory of our loved one and his or her spirit will come to us in peace and understanding.
- Our task, after our grieving period, is to redeem the memory of our loved one so that our loved one's life is not seen and judged through the prism of his or her death. Put their photos back up on the walls, no longer speak of them in hushed tones, celebrate their lives, and speak healthily of the special spirit they brought into the world.

Margaret Atwood once said that sometimes things need to be said, and said, and said again, until they don't need to be said anymore. These points on suicide still need to be said.

Beyond these assertions, let me add two more perspectives on suicide that I have found helpful.

The first one is a lesson from nature. Here's Elilf Shafak, a botanist, reflecting on the suicide of his friend's mother: "When I was a young botanist, I was asked to diagnose a tree that was not doing well. It seemed to be dying. After many tests, nothing conclusive, I took a shovel and began to dig, and I learned a lesson I have never forgotten: *girdling* was happening below the surface. The tree was being strangled by its own roots. If the encircling roots are not found on time, they start putting pressure on the tree, and it just becomes too much to bear. ... Your mother's death has nothing to do with the absence of love. She was blooming and thriving with your love, and I'd like to believe with mine too, but underneath, something was strangling her: the past, the memories, the roots."

Sometimes, our own roots (complexity, trauma, confusion, frustration, biology) can be so overpowering that they work at killing the body. As James Hillman writes in his book *Suicide and the Soul,* sometimes there are deep things inside us that cannot make themselves heard, and their frustration eventually works to strangle the body. Our own roots are sometimes such a complex mixture of soul and biology that we begin to asphyxiate.

The second thought comes from Jeffrey Monroe in his book *Reading Buechner: Exploring the Work of a Master Memoirist, Novelist, Theologian, and Preacher. Frederick Buechner, a Christian pastor,* had to deal with his dad's suicide. As a son, as a man of faith, as a pastor trying to help others understand, he searched for answers vis-à-vis his dad's suicide. The answers didn't come easily, or seemingly, at all. Eventually, Buechner came to this understanding of his dad's suicide.

The best pastoral answer in the face of inexplicable tragedy (his dad's suicide) isn't an answer at all. *It's a presence.* On this side of eternity, we won't get all the answers, not least to the question of suicide. Sometimes there is no satisfactory answer in our darkest moments, like when we lose a loved one to suicide. *What matters most in those dark moments is that we can trust that God did not abandon our loved one. And what we desire, more than answers, is God.*

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

LITTLE CATHOLIC'S CORNER

Dear children,

Have you ever said, "But they did it first!" when you were arguing with your brother, sister, or friend? Maybe they took your toy, pushed you, or said something mean. You might think, "Why should I forgive them when they started it?" But what does Jesus say we should do?

In today's Gospel, Peter asks Jesus, Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answers, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Jesus wants us to forgive again and again.

Jesus tells a story about a servant who owed the king a huge amount of money. He could not pay it back, so he begged for mercy. The king felt sorry for him and forgave the whole debt. But this same servant refused to show mercy to another servant who owed him a much smaller amount. The first servant had received mercy from the king but did not show mercy to someone else.

Jesus teaches us that forgiveness is not a scorecard. We should not think, "I've already forgiven you three times. That's enough!" Instead, Jesus asks us to keep forgiving. We can remember how God forgives us and try to show that same mercy to others.

So, don't keep score. When someone hurts you, ask Jesus to help you forgive with a loving heart.

Love, Aunty C



WORD SEARCH

Find the words from Matthew 18:21-35.
Words can go across, down or diagonally.

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

WORD LIST

PETER
JESUS
KING
SERVANT
MERCY
DEBT
FORGIVE
JAIL
SEVENTY
KINGDOM



Word Scramble for The Story of the Forgiving King

Unscramble each of the clue words. Take the letters that appear in the circles and unscramble them to find the answer to the last phrase.

TEDB ☐☐☐◯

CYMER ☐◯◯☐☐

ORPINS ☐◯◯☐☐☐

ELOWFL ◯◯☐☐☐☐

NAHVEE ◯☐◯◯☐☐

MOGINDK ☐☐☐◯☐◯☐

You should _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

from your _ _ _ _ _ _.



I CHOOSE TO FORGIVE!



When someone hurts me,

I can _____.



Instead of staying angry,

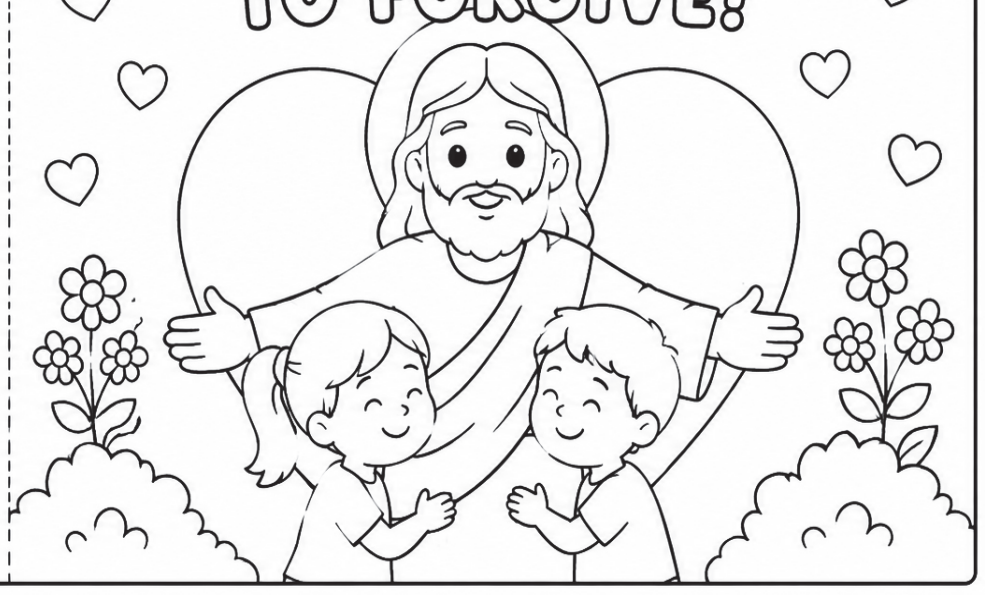
I can _____.



Jesus, please help me

_____.

JESUS HELPS ME TO FORGIVE!



YOUTH

Pre-PDYD-6 Phase 3:

Abundant Catch





KAMPAR, Perak: More than 100 young people gathered at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar, on August 22 for *Pre-PDYD-6 Phase 3: Abundant Catch,* continuing the journey towards Penang Diocesan Youth Day 6 (PDYD-6).

The day began with a welcome address by Fr Simon Anand, head of the Penang Diocesan Youth Network (PDYN), who encouraged the young people to journey together in faith. He also introduced the five patron saints of World Youth Day (WYD) Seoul 2027, inviting participants to look to their lives of faith, courage, and witness. Their stories remind us that holiness is not distant or impossible. God works through ordinary people who are willing to say yes and trust His plan.



Paul Julianose, from Seeds Ministry, then led the participants into the theme of *Abundant Catch,* reminding them that God has blessed each of us with unique gifts and talents. When we step beyond our comfort zones and place these gifts at His service, God can multiply our efforts beyond what we imagine.

But more importantly, the sharing challenged the idea that happiness comes from success, recognition, or a perfectly planned life. Sometimes, we have to trust God without knowing what lies ahead. True joy comes from knowing that we are loved by God and that every blessing we receive is ultimately a gift from Him.



Jason Alexander, Youth Coordinator of PDYN, continued by introducing the journey of Pre-PDYD and PDYD-6, together with the upcoming WYD Seoul 2027. He reminded participants that these gatherings are more than programmes to attend. They are opportunities to encounter Christ, build friendships, grow in faith, and discover our place in the mission of the Church.



The journey also came alive through ***Ellenney Asong,*** who shared her experience as a participant throughout the Pre-PDYD-6. She described the gathering as a "breath of fresh air," seeing in it the faith, enthusiasm, and commitment of Catholic young people. Coming together, caring for one another, and sharing the same faith became a glimpse of what it means to live as one Body in Christ. She also reminded young people not to feel unworthy when serving God as it is He who makes us worthy. Our service is not about recognition or praise, but about glorifying Him. She encouraged young people to love and pray for one another, trust each other, and place their hopes and plans into God's hands.

So, what's the catch?

An abundant catch does not happen because the nets are perfect. It happens when we are willing to cast them out in faith.

God has already given each of us something to offer. We may sometimes feel that what we have is too little, or that we are not good enough to make a difference. But *Abundant Catch* reminds us that God is not looking for perfection. He is looking for hearts willing to trust, respond, and take the next step with Him.

Encouragement for young people: You have a place in God's mission. Your gifts matter. Your voice matters. Your presence matters. Don't be afraid to cast your net into the deep, even when you do not know what the catch will look like.

As we continue towards PDYD-6 and WYD Seoul 2027, come, take the next step, and see what God can do with what you bring. Have the courage to trust, the faith to cast your nets, and the willingness to say yes when God calls.

THE MISSING PIECE MIGHT BE YOU

KUALA LUMPUR: Following the first Archdiocesan Young People Council (AYPC) gathering in January 2026, young people and those who accompany them came together again on August 23, 2026 for the next stage of the council's formation at the Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong.

The gathering brought together young people and those who accompany them from 24 parishes and seven districts, representing parish youth, young adult and campus ministry. Full-time campus and youth ministers, animators and the Archdiocesan Single Adults & Youth Office (ASAYO) Pastoral team were also present.

The gathering began in prayer, led by Fr Simon Lau, director of ASAYO. Archbishop Julian Leow then addressed the young people, offering his encouragement and sharing the wider vision of journeying together as a Church. Using the image of a puzzle, he reminded them that the most important piece of any puzzle is the missing piece, encouraging them never to underestimate the contribution they can make: You could be the very person that is missing in what the community needs today.



While the January gathering marked the beginning of the journey, August gave young leaders an opportunity to reconnect with the vision of AYPC and renew their commitment to listening, discernment, accompaniment and service across the archdiocese. It also provided an opportunity to clarify the role AYPC is intended to play within the wider Young People Ministry of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

The afternoon unfolded through three movements. Jacinta Fernandez, ASAYO coordinator, presented the developing vision and structure of Young People Ministry in the archdiocese. Jaclyn Tan, Campus Minister, led a reflection on Safe Ministry, Safe Self and Safe Community, focusing on the culture young leaders are called to build together.

In the final session, Michelle Anthony, Kuala Lumpur Central District Pastoral Assistant, and Jacinta facilitated a collaborative process inviting young people to listen, discern and contribute to the development of future initiatives, including the R.E.A.L. Young Leaders' Pathway.

The gathering concluded in prayer led by Fr Michel Dass, followed by dinner and fellowship.

WHAT IS AYPC?

AYPC is a support, listening, and discernment network connecting young people serving in parishes, campuses, young adult communities, and the wider Young People Ministry of the archdiocese.

Members remain rooted in their local communities while bringing their experiences, needs and hopes into a wider conversation. Through AYPC, young leaders receive formation and support, learn from one another and help discern the pastoral needs of young people across the archdiocese.

AYPC is not intended to replace local ministry or centralise everything at the archdiocesan level. Rather, it seeks to strengthen relationships between local communities and the wider Church, so that leaders can support one another, communities can learn from one another, and the realities of young people can be heard.

Listen, Discern, Accompany, Serve

At the heart of AYPC are four commitments: ***listen*** to the experiences, needs and hopes of young people; ***discern*** through prayer and shared reflection how the Church is called to respond; ***accompany*** one another by sharing experiences, resources and support; and ***serve*** by bringing what is discerned back to local communities. Together, these commitments invite young people to be active participants in the life and mission of the Church, rather than simply recipients of programmes.

Part of a Wider Young People Ecosystem

AYPC forms part of the developing Young People Ecosystem of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, connecting parish, campus and young adult ministry. This pastoral direction builds on the listening and discernment of MCYD 2025, which highlighted the importance of accompaniment, belonging, meaningful participation and opportunities for young people to contribute to the Church.

The presence of leaders from 24 parishes, seven districts, and different areas of Young People Ministry on August 23 offered a glimpse of this vision in practice: different communities and experiences connected by a shared desire to walk with young people. It reflects a broader pastoral movement from programmes to persons, events to encounters, and ministry for young people to journeying with young people.

Through AYPC, young people are invited to listen, discern, accompany and serve, bringing their experiences and gifts into the wider Church. Our ministry may be local, but we do not journey alone. **ASAYO KL**



Christian Life Series: Built to last

Alicia Morris & Christopher Felix

IPOH: Thirty-three young adults gathered at La Salle Centre over the *Merdeka* long weekend for a Christian Life Series (CLS), jointly organised by Christ's Youth in Action (CYA), Penang, and Friends in Action for Christ (FIAT), Kuala Lumpur.

The Spirit-filled weekend centred on encountering Jesus Christ, growing in faith and discovering what it means to live the fullness of Christian life.

The CLS invites participants to deepen their relationship with Christ and openness to the Holy Spirit, Christian community and life in the Church. While aimed at practising Christians, it also reaches out to those discerning a wholehearted commitment to follow Christ.

With the theme *Built to Last,* the weekend invited participants to examine the foundations of their faith and what it means to build a Christian life firmly rooted in Christ.

Across three days, six talks explored topics including *God is Love, Who Jesus is* and *His Mission, What it Means to be a Christian, the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit, Repentance and Faith,* and *The Christian Ideal,* alongside practical steps for continued growth. The journey culminated in prayer and an invitation to renew their commitment to the Lord and openness to the Holy Spirit.

Beyond the talks, praise and worship, fellowship, prayer, and personal sharing gave participants space to not only learn about the faith but to encounter God in a personal way.

Beyond the Weekend

"This weekend revealed that God will give you the very best and that fear really melts away in His presence. Not because I now know more, but because of the assurance God has shown me. My trust in Him really shifted." ***Rene Tang***

"I had a really good time meeting all the brothers and sisters. Coming from a busy work life, I could really feel God's presence and love among the participants. I want to continue to surround myself with this community." ***Jeremy Lim***

"It is my first time joining CLS, and it's been an amazing and empowering journey. For the longest time, I've been searching for an environment like this. I loved



the conversations with the brothers and sisters, which opened my mind to so many things." ***Jassmine Roy***

"I'm really thankful that I joined CLS last year and was able to join again this year. Every time I say yes, I come away with so many realisations. I've gotten to know Him more, and I'm grateful to continue this journey with all of you." ***April S. Honorio***

"This was the first camp I attended in a long time where I felt the speakers were really impactful. What touched me most was the worship session. I really felt the Lord's presence in the prayer postures and in seeing everyone worship and praise the Lord in their own way." ***Fabian Morais***

"I saw the poster of CLS with the words 'Built to Last' and it intrigued me. I was brought up in the faith and am a practising Catholic. But the sessions prompted me to reflect: how can I do it better? How can I grow more? How can I build my faith? I realised that nobody is perfect. We are all imperfect children of God, and no matter what, God is still there for us." ***Rachel Seah***

The testimonies pointed to a common desire to keep growing through prayer, the Holy Spirit, and Christian community beyond the weekend.

As participants returned to their daily responsibilities, the invitation remained: to build a life on Christ that is not merely strong for a weekend, but built to last.

About CYA and FIAT

Christ's Youth in Action (CYA) is a movement of young people across Asia that seeks to evangelise and form future leaders for the Church and society. *Friends in Action for Christ (FIAT)* is a young professionals ministry dedicated to living out Christian values, building strong relationships in Christ and bringing Christ into the workplace. CYA and FIAT are outreach arms of the *Covenanted for Christ Community (CFCC)* that serve both youths and young professionals aged 18 to 35. For information on upcoming activities, follow *@fiat.ministry* and *@cya.penang.my* on Instagram.



Building blocks of a spirit-filled life

JOHOR: "When the Holy Spirit takes over, we become different," Bishop Bernard Paul told 69 confirmands, challenging them to make a difference wherever they go.

The Bishop of the Malacca Johore Diocese presided at the Confirmation Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday, August 29, where 69 young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation: 25 from the English group, nine from the Mandarin group, eight from the Tamil group and 27 from the Bahasa group.

The Mass was concelebrated by the parish priest, Fr Claurence Motoyou, OFM, and the priest in residence, Fr Leo Elias, who, together with the parish community, accompanied the young people throughout their preparation.

Mary Pereira, chief catechist for the English group, thanked the parents, godparents and all who had nurtured the confirmands in faith. She said they were now ready to be "sealed and sent".

Emmy Jong, deputy director of the CIC Catechetical Team, reminded the confirmands that Confirmation is not a graduation but a new beginning as full-fledged members of the Church. They are called to be witnesses so that others may encounter Jesus and know His love.

In his homily, Bishop Bernard reflected on how the Holy Spirit transforms lives. He recalled once thinking all religions were the same, but came to know God as real, close, and loving.

The Spirit opened his eyes, ears and heart to his calling as a diocesan priest, eventually leading him to become bishop. He identified four building blocks:

1. New birth
The Holy Spirit gives us the baptism of Spirit and fire, which purifies and frees us.

2. New heart
The Holy Spirit gives us a heart of flesh, not stone, enabling us to love God, His commandments and one another.

3. New spirit
The Holy Spirit is our advocate, helper and friend. He gives us new life, strength and insight into matters of the heart.

4. New life
The Holy Spirit leads us to a God-centred life, reminding us that God is near and dwells within us.

Bishop Bernard reminded the confirmands that these four building blocks can work for us or against us. As Christians, when we fall because of sin, we must get up and continue the journey. It does not matter how we start, he said, but it is important to finish strong.

The celebration marked an important milestone for the 69 confirmands, who received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to strengthen their faith and deepen their relationship with God.

Beyond the Building

To begin with, what is the Church? Some may say it is a building or a house of God. But the true meaning of the Church is its people and community. Instead of focusing on the physical building, I would like to share my experience as a 17-year-old who went through Confirmation.

Before I started, I thought Confirmation was simply a ceremony that all 17-year-olds complete as Catholics. I did not know what to expect or what would happen during and after Confirmation. Looking back, the journey felt like climbing a mountain. It required effort and patience, but reaching the top made it worthwhile.

I still remember a Catechism class where my teacher talked about the Greatest of All Time (GOAT), asking, "Who is the GOAT?" and "What defines someone as a GOAT?" Through my classes, I also learnt the importance of the Church as a place where I learn about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I also attended the Confirmation Camp, which truly touched my heart because it was a place where I experienced true change.

This experience made me realise how important God is in our lives and led me to reflect on my relationship with Him. I now understand that Confirmation is not the end, but the beginning.

We all face challenges. I used to be addicted to my phone and had little time for my family. Through this struggle, I learnt the importance of time and of spending each moment truly living.

My views on Confirmation have changed significantly. I want to live a different and holier life, knowing that change cannot happen overnight but through small steps.

For me, this means allowing the Holy Spirit to guide me daily. I know this is only the beginning of my journey, but I hope these steps will help me grow closer to God. **Jarret Raphael Winson**



When grief happens far from home, compassion unites



Fr Richard Anthonysamy SJ presiding at the memorial Mass.

PETALING JAYA: On August 26, family, friends and members of the community gathered for a memorial service at the Church of St Francis Xavier (SFX), to pay their final respects to Peter and support his wife, Gina, as she brought her husband's long and difficult journey home to its final chapter. Coming from near and far, they joined in prayer, shared memories and offered their quiet presence to Gina and her children at a time when it mattered most.

Gina and Peter had travelled to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. During the pilgrimage, Peter suffered a cardiac arrest and sadly passed away. Peter was cremated in Madrid. Bringing his ashes home to Malaysia involved extensive documentation and legal procedures. Gina and her son had to manage paperwork in Spanish, arrange translations and navigate the requirements for repatriation. While dealing with the shock of their loss, they were also faced with the many practical challenges of doing everything in a foreign country. After a long and difficult process, Peter's ashes were finally brought home to Kuala Lumpur.

The Memorial Mass at SFX was celebrated by Fr Richard Anthonysamy SJ. It was a time for those who knew Peter to come together in prayer and remembrance, and to offer comfort to his family. Members of the Widows Ministry were there in prayer and companionship, joined by St Benedict Borneo BEC from Jesus Caritas, who came as a group and as part of the wider Borneo community. Peter's hiking friends and close friends, from near and far, also came to be present and pay their respects.

Though from different walks of life, they were united in their desire to support Gina and her family with their presence, prayers and friendship during a deeply difficult time. Together, they offered a quiet yet powerful witness to the strength of community and compassion.

Peter's ashes were subsequently laid to rest at Gui Yuan, bringing this chapter to a peaceful close. Gina's journey reminds us that grief can come with many unexpected challenges, especially when a loss happens far from home. At such a time, the kindness of others can become a source of comfort — through prayer, friendship, practical help or simply taking the time to be present.

In times of loss, kindness brings people closer. A caring presence, a willing heart and a simple gesture of compassion can bring comfort and give someone the strength to take the next step.

The Widows Ministry is thankful to be part of this wider circle of care, where people come together with compassion and understanding. May we continue to reach out to one another, especially when our presence is needed most.

MEMORIAM

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4th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of



A. Franklin Netto
27.01.1947 – 17.09.2022

"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me." (Philippians 4:13)

Sadly missed by
his siblings.

8th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of
Anthony Fong



14.1.1964 – 16.9.2018

Your life was a blessing,
Your memory a treasure,
You are loved beyond words, and missed beyond measure.

Deeply missed
and cherished by
Beloved wife. Melrose
and daughter, Felicity.



12TH ANNIVERSARY
IN EVER LOVING MEMORY OF

LOURDS MARY ANTHONY (MRS. C. ANTHONY)
Departed:
24-09-2014

Mum,
The world changes from year to year, our lives from day to day, but the love and memory of you, shall never pass away.

Your family.

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In Loving Memory of



Amalor Mary
d/o Lourdesamy

Departed: 10 September 2009

A precious gift from God, a loving mother, grandmother, and guiding light to all who knew her. Her love lives on in the hearts of her family and in the countless lives she touched.

Deeply missed by
Children and loved ones.



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Building bridges between Slovakia and Malaysia

Christopher Kushi

PENANG: Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, received Peter Spišiak, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Malaysia, during a courtesy visit to the Diocesan Centre in George Town on September 2.

During their cordial exchange, Ambassador Spišiak commended the Malaysian Church's commitment to interreligious dialogue and its role in fostering friendship and a shared sense of humanity among the country's diverse communities.

Cardinal Sebastian highlighted Malaysia's distinctive model of interfaith cooperation through the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST). The council brings together the country's major non-Muslim faith traditions to promote mutual understanding, goodwill and harmony within Malaysia's multicultural society.

Ambassador Spišiak also explained the artistic inspiration behind the logo of the Slovak Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Combining elements of Malay batik and traditional Slovak textile motifs, the logo carries the theme, *Together Beyond Distance – Building Bridges between Slovakia and Malaysia.*



Ambassador Peter Spišiak and Cardinal Sebastian Francis sharing a light moment during the ambassador's courtesy visit on September 2.

Cardinal Sebastian noted that the theme resonated with the recent 12th Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in Jakarta, Indonesia, which called upon the Church to be "bridges and bridge-builders" in Asia.

The meeting deepened mutual understanding and goodwill between the Embassy of the Slovak Republic and the Diocese of Penang, reaffirming their shared commitment to dialogue and bridge-building.





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