The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

TERHAD | PP 8460/11/2012 (030939) ISSN: 1394-3294 | Vol: 33 No. 34 | September 27, 2026 | www.heraldmalaysia.com

Mission Statement

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


(Gereja Katolik Malaysia)

Together INTO THE DEEP

Patricia Pereira

SIBU: The Catholic Church in Malaysia was sent forth from its first national pastoral convention with a summons to leave the safety of the shoreline and "put out into the deep" — carrying the fruits of prayer, listening and discernment into its dioceses, parishes and communities.

Cardinal Sebastian Francis issued the call during the Missioning Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on September 12, which concluded the formal programme of the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026).

Drawing on Christ's command to Simon Peter in Luke 5:4 — *Duc in Altum,* or *Put out into the deep* — he challenged the Malaysian Church to move beyond familiar ways of thinking and acting, and embrace conversion in its relationships, processes and structures.

"Do not remain along the shoreline or at the margins. Do not be afraid to enter deeper waters. Lower your nets into the deep," he said.

Held from September 9 to 12 under the theme *Celebrate, Listen, Walk Together,* MPC2026 brought together bishops, clergy, religious and lay leaders from all nine dioceses of Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia.

The gathering drew together the fruits of years of consultation and discernment at parish, diocesan and regional levels.

At the opening Mass at Sibu Gateway on Sept 9, nine pilgrim crosses — one from each diocese — were reunited as a single cross, symbolising the prayers, hopes and diverse pastoral experiences of one Malaysian Church.

Over four days of prayer and discernment, participants reflected on the interconnected realities of Family, Church, Society and Ecology. Through *Conversation in the Spirit,* they shared the joys, wounds and challenges of their communities, listened prayerfully to one another, entered into periods of silence, and discerned where the Holy Spirit might be leading the Church.

This led to a collective commitment to four core areas: supporting families and younger generations; caring for the environment and our common home; serving the poor, the marginalised and all persons in need; and contributing to nation-building as bridge-builders across Malaysian society.

The pastoral pathways that emerged were not fixed programmes to be imposed uniformly, but directions to be further discerned and lived by each diocese according to its pastoral context.

At the Missioning Mass, Cardinal Sebastian made clear that the gathering must now lead to mission and transformation.

Although the vocations and responsibilities of clergy, religious and laity differed, he reminded them that they shared "one Baptism, one Lord, one Church and one mission".

The cardinal identified three areas of synodal conversion: relationships, processes, and the Church's network of relationships and structures.

The first was reflected in the encounter among Catholics from Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia. Despite their differences in culture, language and experience, they had come together as members of the same Church.

"We are not three Churches. We are one Church in Malaysia," he declared.

The second conversion concerned how the Church listens and discerns. Catholics must listen in the Holy Spirit, particularly to those whose voices are easily overlooked — not merely to prepare an answer, but to recognise God's will together.

The third and deeper conversion must take place within the Church's relationships and structures.

"If our relationships have undergone synodal conversion, and if our processes have undergone synodal conversion, then our bonds and structures must ultimately be transformed as well," he said.

The Holy Spirit was not asking participants simply to enjoy "a beautiful experience" during MPC2026, the Cardinal added, but was preparing the Church to become more united, synodal, missionary and capable of going beyond itself.

Before entering deeper waters, however, the Church must confront the wounds and burdens that continue to bind it to the past.

"We need forgiveness. We need healing. We need deliverance. We need freedom," he said.

Cardinal Sebastian then posed a question that carried the convention's discernment beyond Sibu. Rather than asking only, "What is the Holy Spirit saying to the Church in Malaysia?", Catholics must also ask: "What is the Holy Spirit doing in and to the Church in Malaysia?"

Together with the other eight bishops of Malaysia, he called upon Catholics to "enter the boat together with Christ the Lord" and entrust their families, society, the Church and their communion with creation to the Holy Trinity.

The mission ahead, he stressed, must not depend solely upon human strength, plans or wisdom, but upon the Father who calls, the Son who chooses and remains in the boat, and the Holy Spirit who sends the Church forth.

"We are called. We are chosen. And now, we are sent."

He concluded: "Let us put out into the deep — for the Church in Malaysia, for the Church in Asia and for the Universal Church."

See also Pages 2, 10 and 14.

● ***Read more about MPC2026 in our supplement next week.***

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
Phil 2:1-2



St Mary's marks 140 years with renewed care for creation
■ P4



A new ministry of hope for Penang diocese
■ P8



Accompanying families through cancer
■ P12

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1994

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

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


EDITOR
Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my


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


JOURNALIST
Christina Lazaroo
christina@herald.com.my


GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my


SOCIAL MEDIA
Kevin Francis
kevin@herald.com.my


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


MANDARIN
Adelina Wong
yin4482@gmail.com


TAMIL
Perzeus James
tamil@herald.com.my


ADMIN ASSISTANT
Rachael Sharma
admin@herald.com.my

ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

Social Media

www.heraldmalaysia.com

@heraldmalaysia

heraldmalaysia
Herald Snapshot

@heraldsnapshot

Disclaimer:

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

Become a voice in the HERALD community

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

After Sibu: The walking continues

The Malaysia Pastoral Convention is over. The conversations have been had, and more than 800 delegates have gone home. Now comes the question that matters: ***What will change?***

For five days in Sibu, delegates from Malaysia's nine arch/dioceses prayed, listened, shared, and discerned together. But a pastoral convention is not measured by what happens in the hall. Its value is seen afterwards — in families, BECS, parishes, and wider society.

The MPC was intended to help discern the pastoral direction of the Malaysian Catholic Church for the next 10 years. That provides an essential long-term horizon, but it must not become a rigid blueprint. The vision must remain open to review, evaluation, and adaptation as realities change. Most importantly, discernment must lead somewhere. What was heard in Sibu must shape consciences, priorities, and decisions. Otherwise, even the most carefully crafted pastoral pathway will remain only a document.

We were not starting from zero

The MPC did not begin in a vacuum. The Malaysian Church had already journeyed through major gatherings, including the Malaysia Catholic Clergy Assembly (MCCA), Malaysia Religious Assembly (MRA), Regional Pastoral Assemblies (RPA), and Malaysia Catholic Youth Day (MCYD). For years, the nine arch/dioceses have also reflected on four broad pillars — *Church, Ecology, Family, and Society* — drawing from Pope Francis' encyclicals.

The *Conversations in the Spirit* at Sibu continued a journey already underway. Delegates needed to understand what had already been raised at previous gatherings. Many concerns brought to Sibu were not new.

The Church's challenge is rarely a failure to identify its problems; it is what happens after they are identified. What happens in the quiet years between major gatherings? Are recommendations tracked and evaluated? Are dioceses and parishes equipped to respond? When an initiative fails, do we have the humility to ask why? The Church does not need another decade of re-identifying the same problems — it needs the courage to learn from what has already been heard and to make different choices.

The humility to learn

If synodality demands walking together, it also requires humility. Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibu offered a vital reminder when he reflected that we can sometimes become too full of ourselves to learn from others.

Malaysia's nine arch/dioceses do not face identical pastoral realities:

- ***Peninsular Malaysia:*** For many urban parishes, an ageing Catholic population brings concerns such as elderly isolation, homebound parishioners, and caring for parents whose children have moved elsewhere. The Church must ask how older Catholics can continue to belong, participate, and contribute rather than becoming passive recipients of care.
- ***Sabah and Sarawak:*** The pastoral landscape presents different urgencies, including the needs of indigenous and rural communities, youth, and families spread across vast geographical areas.

Pastoral responses that work in one context cannot simply be transplanted into another. True synodality requires recognising that no region holds all the answers. The Church must ask not only, *"What can we teach others?"* but also, *"What must we learn from them?"*

If people cannot understand, they cannot discern

This commitment was put to a practical test at the convention: ***language.***

At the fourth Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Convention in 2016, a clear call was made for greater use of Bahasa Malaysia. Yet language limitations remain a challenge. At the MPC, some delegates were unable to fully engage with key presentations because of language barriers.

This is more than event management. Language touches dignity, justice, and communion. If people cannot understand, they cannot meaningfully discern, respond, or contribute. ***Physical presence does not equal genuine participation.*** A Church that wants to walk together must make it possible for everyone to hear — and to be heard.

Faith beyond the church walls

Another challenge emerging from Sibu is the call for Catholics to see their faith as extending beyond parish structures.

As a minority community in Malaysia, our contribution to the nation cannot rest on numbers alone. It must be expressed through service, integrity, relationships, and meaningful participation in society. Bishop Richard Ng of Miri highlighted the importance of encouraging young people to enter public life and advocate for clean politics — a challenge that requires solid formation.

This is where Catholic Social Teaching (CST) becomes crucial. CST cannot remain confined to clergy, religious, academics, or social action committees; it must become part of the formation of every layperson, especially our youth. Principles like human dignity, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and care for creation provide a framework for living out faith in the real world.

When migrants are exploited, families struggle under economic strain, or corruption undermines public institutions, these are moral questions that challenge our faith. The Church does not need to tell young people which political party to support, but it must form their consciences so they can enter public life with integrity.

What will I do?

The Malaysian Church now awaits the pastoral pathways that will emerge from the bishops' discernment. But renewal does not belong only to bishops or diocesan structures; it belongs to every baptised person.

The question now becomes personal: ***What did I hear in Sibu that challenged me, and what will I do differently because of it?***

The answer need not be grand:

- If the isolation of older Catholics concerns us, visit someone who is alone.
- If young people are not being heard, create space for their voices.
- If migrants remain on the margins, get to know and welcome them.
- If CST matters, begin learning it together in our families, BECs, or parishes.

Each of us should be able to name one concrete response. The measure of Sibu will ultimately be whether recommendations begin to shape how the Church lives, serves, and relates to others.

The MPC has given us a direction. Now we must turn conversation into conscience, and conscience into commitment.

The convention is over. ***The walking continues.***

Sandra Ann

The courage to look in the mirror

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: Ezekiel 18:25-28; Philippians 2:1-11; Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

While scrolling through Facebook reels, I came across many short videos, many of them AI-generated, and they are either from China or the US, focusing on corporate office culture and environment. One of the most typical themes is the rivalry between two co-workers. There is always an underdog employee whose work is crucial to the survival of the company but often overlooked because of his or her lowly status. The antagonist will always be a man or a woman who has no skills at all but is very good at buttering up the boss with their smooth talk. Very often, the antagonist will take credit for the work and achievement of the protagonist. The result is usually very predictable – the protagonist will leave the company, the boss and the antagonist will jump with joy and claim credit for all the work, and in the end, when things start to collapse, they will refuse to believe that it was the protagonist's work that held it together, until it is too late.

TV dramas are always a reflection of the reality of life. Whether it is the workplace, family, ministry, or parish, the question of integrity and honesty is always present. Sometimes, when things happen or uncomfortable situations arise, there will be a certain group of people who will make noise, and many a time, they are the ones with the least amount of integrity, especially if the status quo is threatened. When this happens, we need to ask ourselves this question – why am I making so much noise when oftentimes it is not even my business?

The prophet Ezekiel poses this question to us today. We say that God and people are unjust, but have we ever asked ourselves whether what we do and say is unjust? Ezekiel gives us the comparison between the just and unjust man: an upright and just man will suffer death if he renounces his integrity and commits sin while an unjust man who renounces his sin to become honest, he deserves life. A life of honesty and integrity is a life well lived. Having integrity means to live a life of honesty, truthfulness and in conformity with the will of God.

St Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, tells us not to be in competition amongst ourselves, to be self-effacing and without conceit. This is certainly something that we need to seriously look at. Whether we admit it or not, there is always this sense of competition, either between ministries or BEC and even among parishes. This is something very human, and the need to come out on top is somehow embedded in our very self. While competition is good, unhealthily trying to outdo one another brings out the worst in us. When complications or difficulties arise, the blame game begins, and no one wants to take responsibility. Where is our integrity then?

Integrity is about being honest with one another and working together to build up instead of tearing down. Conformity with the will of God is about unity in the midst of diversity. Ideally, all we need to do is set aside our ego and to think of others as being better than ourselves. This is another gem from St Paul. When we start to think of others as being better than ourselves, we always look out for the interests of others and not our own. However, in reality, we know that this rarely happens. The fact is that we look after ourselves first before anyone else.

The Gospel also shows us the difference between one who has integrity and one who has not. Even though the first son initially said he would not go, he relied on his better judgment and went to work. The second son agreed to go but did not go. On the surface, both sons did not show any integrity, but the first son had a conscience: "He thought better of it and went." That shows strength of character. The second son did not even care and even lied outright.

Having integrity is about honesty, standing firm on one's moral values, and thinking of others before ourselves. We are living in the world, and the values of the world will influence the way we serve in church. The question is, are we courageous enough to take a stand and make the necessary change so that we can create an integrated community and not one that is fragmented?

Change can only happen if we choose to change ourselves and not seek to change others. As Michael Jackson sang in his song "Man in the Mirror", 'If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make the change.'

Limits on non-Muslim ministers unconstitutional

KUALA LUMPUR: Any attempt to prevent non-Muslims from holding government positions responsible for formulating policy would violate the Federal Constitution's guarantee of equality, the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) said.

The council was responding to remarks made by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang on September 8, at the conclusion of the party's 72nd *Muktamar* in Kota Bharu.

Hadi reportedly said non-Muslims could serve as ministers, but their roles would be limited to portfolios overseeing the implementation of government policies, while Muslims would be responsible for formulating those policies.

MCCBCHST, in its Sept 11 statement, said the remarks should be considered alongside Hadi's previous statements. At a dialogue with Indian non-governmental organisations in February 2018, he reportedly proposed the formation of two Cabinets under a PAS-led government — one to determine national policies and another, which could include non-Muslims, to implement them.

The council also referred to a statement Hadi made when opening the 62nd PAS *Muktamar* in June 2016, when he spoke of reviving an approach practised by Islam 1,400 years ago.

Taken together, MCCBCHST argued, the statements indicated an intention to create a theocratic Islamic state. Such a system, it said, would be incompatible with the Federal Constitution and its protection of the fundamental rights of all citizens.

Article 8 of the Federal Constitution guarantees that all persons are equal before the law and entitled to its equal protection.

MCCBCHST stressed that the Federal Constitution is the supreme law of the country and that any law inconsistent with it may be declared void.

It also cited the "basic structure doctrine", under which certain foundational features of the Constitution cannot be abolished through ordinary legislation or constitutional amendments.

Referring to Federal Court decisions in *Sivarasa Rasiah v Badan Peguam Malaysia, Indira Gandhi v Pengarah Jabatan Agama Islam Perak* and *Alma Nudo Atenza v Public Prosecutor,* the council said fundamental liberties, the separation of powers, the rule of law, judicial review and the protection of minorities formed part of the Constitution's basic structure.

These principles, it maintained, could not be removed even through a constitutional amendment supported by a two-thirds parliamentary majority.

The council also reminded Members of Parliament of their oath to "preserve, protect and defend" the Federal Constitution, saying they had a duty to safeguard it against measures that might weaken its foundational principles.

MCCBCHST further cited the Federal Court's decision in *Nik Elin Zurina Nik Abdul Rashid and Another v Kelantan State Government.* In that case, 16 provisions of the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (I) Enactment 2019 were declared null and void because they dealt with matters beyond the legislative powers of the state.



PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang.

The council urged PAS to exercise caution, abide by the Federal Constitution and pledge to uphold its provisions.

It also called on Malaysians to remain united in defending the Constitution, which it described as a product of negotiation, moderation and compromise that safeguards the rights of all citizens.

A system that undermined constitutional equality or weakened fundamental liberties, MCCBCHST warned, would threaten the rights and protections upon which Malaysia was founded.

Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

September / October

27/9	Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Cameron Highlands
27/9-2/10	Clergy Annual Retreat
3/10	Mass – 70 years of Good Shepherd presence and mission in Malaysia, Cathedral of St John, KL
5-23/10	Meeting – *Amoris Laetitia,* Rome

Malacca Johore Diocese

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

September / October

27/9	Mass – 75th anniversary Church of Christ the King, Kulai
3/10	Meeting – MJD Catechetical at Mission Pastoral Institute, MAJODI Centre
3/10	Confirmation – Church of St Joseph, Plentong
4/10	Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of Divine Mercy, Skudai
4/10	Confirmation – Church of the Holy Spirit, Chapel of St James, Merlimau



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #288

F12 MJD NEWS UPDATES

Welcome dear friends,

The first Malaysia Pastoral Convention ended on Saturday, September 12. After 18 months, the nine diocesan crosses unified at the Gateway of Sibu in a gathering of 3,000.

As the days progressed, many words, thoughts and feelings were exchanged. From the three CIS roundtables, the synthesis room and the discerning room, came the proposed pastoral pathways. Some were specific, providing a national direction; while the remaining had regional and diocesan flavour, and some had personal pains reflected. The many pathways or concerns could be clustered under evangelisation, dialogue, social mission and empowerment.

It remains for the bishops and their pastoral teams to translate them into achievable actions. The MPC reflected unity in diversity. The MPC has initiated the one Catholic Church of Malaysia.

Local Takes! Maybe the haze is to be blamed!

The national-level 63rd Malaysia Day took place at Kuching's Borneo Convention Centre. It showcased regional unity, cultural diversity, and the significance of the Malaysia Agreement 1963. And there came crude and uncouth political jokers to spoil the celebratory mood. What was unexpected was the backlash — the grassroots reactions, the fiery social media, and this time, no one was laughing.

Besides the worsening haze, the *rakyat* remain highly concerned about the rising cost of living even with targeted fuel subsidies, microfinancing and school maintenance.

Unfair monopolies and recruitment cost hikes are angering South Asian recruitment agencies. The data centres consume 31 per cent of the country's peak electricity. Social media news has overtaken traditional TV and news websites.

AI poses human rights risks and existing laws are ill-equipped, say UK MPs. Anthropic CEO called on AI companies to slow down the pace of improving the AI models, fearing misuse and its potential to kill us.

Reading the Signs: Overcoming Hatred and Division

On Pope Leo XIV's book "Freedom Under Grace": it has hit bookshelves in English, bringing together his reflections on the legacy of St Augustine that has shaped his spirituality. On overcoming hatred: Forgiveness spreads a healing love that can overcome all human hatred, resentment and division — ***Pope Leo XIV***

On differences: Differences do not necessarily have to lead to division. They can become a creative force when accompanied by shared responsibility and directed towards the common good. — ***Pope Leo XIV***

On WYD Seoul 2027: While many young people are struggling, World Youth Day can help them lift their gaze to Christ and also show a new humanity that can overcome hatred and division. — ***Cardinal Kevin Farrell***

Thought for the Week: Heaven or Earth?

An old hermit was once invited to visit the court of the most powerful king of those times. "I envy such a saintly man, who is content with so little," said the ruler. "I envy Your Majesty, who is content with even less than I," responded the hermit.

"How can you say such a thing, if this entire country belongs to me?" said the offended king. "For precisely that reason. I have the music of the celestial spheres, I have the rivers and mountains of the whole world, I have the moon and the sun, because I have God in my soul. Your Majesty, on the other hand, has only this kingdom. ***Paulo Coelho***

QnQ? Q asks:What is rest? Is stress the opposite?

"To give God my best requires rest. The difference between blessed and stressed is often rest." Rest is not a luxury. To offer your best in work, family, worship or service, rest is "preparing the offering". It means being a good steward.

The Old Testament rhythm was always "work from rest not rest from work". Sabbath came before the work week, not after. The difference is where you put yourself.

l Stress often says: "Everything depends on me, so I can't stop."

l Blessed says: "Everything depends on God, so I can stop."

l Rest is the practical way we transfer the weight back to Him. It's not that rest removes responsibility. It reorders it. We often try to honour God by doing more. But God never asked for exhausted obedience. He asked for present, whole-hearted obedience. And you can't be present when you're depleted. Maybe the most spiritual thing you can do today isn't to push harder, but to truly stop. To sleep, to walk without your phone, to pray without an agenda, to let Him be God while you rest. (Read Isaiah 30:15.)

The Spirit @ work: "Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet."

Something to tickle you: No one can single-handedly bear the weight of the challenges the world is facing, just as no one is so weak that they cannot play their part, "for power is made perfect in weakness"; (2 Cor 12:9), *Magnifica Humanitas, 13.*

Bishop Bernard Paul

New deacons called to serve Church and nation



Archbishop Julian with the four newly ordained deacons.

SHAH ALAM: As Malaysians celebrated the ties that bind the nation, four men knelt before the altar to dedicate their lives to the service of Christ, the Church and God's people.

Lincoln Lee Keng Chuan, Joseph Tan Yee Ping, Tony Bingkuan OFMCap and Albert Arputhan Maniam were ordained transitional deacons by Archbishop Julian Leow during a Malaysia Day Mass at the Church of the Divine Mercy on September 16.

Their vocation journeys began in different parishes and crossed several countries, but converged in one calling: to proclaim the Gospel, assist at the altar and serve those in need.

Deacon Lincoln, from the Church of the Assumption in Petaling Jaya, is currently based at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Bentong, Pahang. He studied philosophy at College General, Penang, before pursuing theology at St Peter's College, Kuching.

Originally from the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jalan Peel, Deacon Joseph now resides at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Setapak. He also undertook his philosophical studies at College General and his theological formation at St Peter's College.

Deacon Tony, a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, hails from the Church of St Michael in Penampang, Sabah. He now lives and serves at Gethsemani Friary at the Church of St Francis of Assisi in Cheras. His formation took him from St Peter's College to the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay, the Philippines.

From the Church of St Anne in Port Klang, Deacon Albert began his formation at College General and continued at St Peter's College. He completed his theological studies at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

These different paths have brought the four to a ministry defined not by status, but by service.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian connected their ordination with the recent Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC2026), particularly its emphasis on families and young people.

He said their ordination on Malaysia Day highlighted the role of young people in shaping the future of both the Church and the nation. Their ministry, he added, must bring them close to families and people at every stage of life.

"Family here means from the womb to the tomb, from the unborn to those who are elderly and who are sick," he said.

The archbishop urged the new deacons and clergy to respond to the needs of families, whose wellbeing has far-reaching consequences for the Church and society.

Extending his message to the wider congregation, he called on Catholics to become "nation builders" who foster harmony, unity and peace amid the forces that divide society.

Archbishop Julian also paid tribute to the families who had accompanied the four through years of discernment and formation. Inviting them to stand, he thanked them for their support and sacrifices — a reminder that no vocation is nurtured alone.

At the close of the Mass, Deacon Albert expressed the newly ordained deacons' gratitude to their families, formators, parish communities and all who had journeyed with them.

"As we embrace our ministry as deacons, it is no longer we who live but Christ Who lives in us," he said.

With those words, the four began a ministry shaped by the Word, the altar and charity — called to serve the Church and help build a more united and compassionate Malaysia..

Christina Lazaroo

St Mary's marks 140 years with renewed care for creation

Francis Chua



Parishioners reciting the rosary as they walk in procession.

MELAKA: The Church of St Mary marked its Feast Day and the 140th anniversary of St Mary's Chapel with prayer, thanksgiving and fellowship, while renewing its commitment to care for creation through the launch of REGENERATE Year 2.

The celebration began with a Rosary Walk, inviting the faithful to journey with Mary in prayer and reflection. An open-air Mass was celebrated in the evening, followed by the official launch of the second year of REGENERATE, the creation justice initiative of the Diocese of Malacca Johore (MJD).

Carrying the theme, *Regenerate Hope for Land Ecosystems*, the campaign calls the diocesan community to deepen its care for the land and recognise humanity's responsibility as stewards of God's creation.

For the MJD Creation Justice Commission, the launch marked another important step in promoting ecological conversion and translating the Church's concern for our common home into concrete action within parishes and communities.

During the launch, Bishop Bernard Paul and Fr Paul Wong Poh Loke, Bishop's Delegate for the Creation Justice Commission, presented REGENERATE Year 2 campaign posters to representatives of parishes and Catholic organisations throughout the Diocese.

The presentation was a visible sign of the Diocese's shared commitment to creation justice, environmental stewardship and the protection of our common home. Parishes and Catholic organisations are encouraged to bring the message of REGENERATE into their communities and identify practical ways of restoring and protecting the land and its ecosystems.

A Marian procession brought the faithful together in prayer and devotion to Mary, before the celebration continued with refreshments and fellowship.

Over 600 parishioners, friends and guests from various communities took part, reflecting a strong sense of unity, gratitude and shared joy.

The occasion was especially significant as the community commemorated 140 years of faith and witness. It was an opportunity to give thanks for the generations who had nurtured the life of the Church, while reflecting on the responsibility of the present generation to carry that legacy forward.

This movement from prayer to action lies at the heart of REGENERATE. Care for creation is not separate from the Christian faith, but an expression of gratitude to God and a responsibility towards present and future generations.

The MJD Creation Justice Commission hopes that REGENERATE Year 2 will inspire parishes, organisations and individuals throughout the Diocese to move beyond awareness towards meaningful action — restoring the health of the land and its ecosystems and, in doing so, regenerating hope.

As the Church of St Mary looks back on 140 years of faith, the celebration also points towards a renewed future: a Church that prays, acts and works together in caring for our common home.

May Mary, Mother of the Church, accompany the faithful on this journey and lead them ever closer to her Son, Jesus.

CSJE ministry opens doors to interfaith encounter

KUALA LUMPUR: Prayer, dialogue and encounter marked the first steps of the newly formed Parish Ministry of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs (PMEIA) at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.

Through three activities held in August and September, the ministry sought to deepen faith, foster mutual understanding and build relationships across religious and cultural boundaries.

Its journey began on August 27 during the *Perjalanan Salib* (Journey of the Cross) at the cathedral, where members prayed for the strength, courage and wisdom to carry out their mission of promoting unity and collaboration among faith communities.



Baha Hilo sharing his personal experience of Palestine.

Still in its formative stage, PMEIA is creating opportunities for cathedral parishioners to learn about other faiths, cultures and experiences. In September, it collaborated with the nearby Church of St Anthony on two activities.

The first was a talk on Sept 3 by Palestinian social activist Baha Hilo, who shared his personal experience of life amid conflict and uncertainty.

During the question-and-answer session, a participant asked how young people coped with the continuing political and civil upheaval. Hilo pointed to the family as a vital source of hope, describing how relatives supported one another and remained united despite the instability surrounding them.

On Sept 12, the cathedral's PMEIA and the Church of St Anthony organised a joint visit to the Sin Sze Si Ya Temple and Museum in Kuala Lumpur.

Established in 1864, the temple has been part of the city's history for over 160 years. Its museum, which opened in 2023, recounts the contributions of Kuala Lumpur's early *Kapitans,* including Yap Ah Loy, who played a significant role in rebuilding the city after the Selangor Civil War, a devastating fire and a major flood.

Museum guides led the group through the temple and museum, explaining the temple's history and functions, the work of its committee, the deities honoured there and the significance of objects used in worship.

For one participant, the visit helped overcome a long-held hesitation. She said she had previously felt apprehensive about entering the sacred spaces of other cultures. Joining an organised visit gave her the confidence to enter the temple, ask questions and gain a better understanding of its traditions.

The visit also brought to light a historical connection between the temple and the cathedral. Fr Charles Hector Letessier, the cathedral's first parish priest, had written in the *Selangor Journal* about the cultural and religious practices of his Chinese neighbours, including an account of a temple procession through the streets of Kuala Lumpur.

Over a century later, the connection offers a reminder that these two places of worship remain part of the city's rich religious and cultural landscape.

"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unalike," wrote poet and author Maya Angelou in her poem *Human Family.* Her words aptly express the mission of PMEIA: to cross boundaries, encounter one another with respect and discover the humanity that binds us together.

Agnes Ong

Let care for creation take root

Melina Yeoh

TAMPIN: Ecological conversion begins with recognising the harm humanity inflicts on Creation — and accepting that even small actions can help restore and protect our common home.

That message was at the heart of an outdoor Mass marking the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at the Church of St John Marie Vianney, where some 190 parishioners and friends representing 22 parishes in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur gathered on September 5.

Celebrated amid the natural surroundings of the church grotto, the Mass was presided over by Fr Andrew Manickam, ecclesiastical assistant of the KL Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry (CJM), and concelebrated by the clergy of the Negeri district comprising Fr Albet Arockiasamy, Fr Xavier Andrew, Fr Edwin Peter and Fr Anthony Robert.

In his homily, Fr Xavier reflected on the need for ecological conversion, stressing that it must begin with an awareness of ecological sin.

He pointed out that nature, plants and animals are often mistreated or discarded without much thought because the consequences may not be immediately visible or personally felt.


Photo credit: OLF Photography Ministry

Calling attention to the seriousness of environmental destruction, he suggested that it should be regarded as an "eighth deadly sin".

Fr Xavier also highlighted the devastating consequences of climate change, including melting glaciers and floods, and reminded the faithful that caring for creation does not always require dramatic action.

Everyone, he said, can play a part through simple choices — from picking up plastic waste to planting and caring for trees.

Following Mass, parish priest Fr Albet invited participants to explore the church grounds and spend time encountering the natural environment around them.

Many took the opportunity to check on the progress of a *ciku (sapodilla)* tree planted in the church compound in May, while others spent quiet moments in prayer and reflection at the outdoor Stations of the Cross.

The Negeri District youth reinforced the message of environmental stewardship through an entertaining skit highlighting the responsibility of Christians to care for creation.

As a tangible reminder that the mission must continue beyond the gathering, representatives from each of the 22 parishes received a potted plant to take back to their respective communities. The plants included gardenia jasmine, cockscomb, *tecomaria* and *polyscias.*

Creation Justice Ministry coordinators from several parishes across the archdiocese were among those present.

Marilyn Naveedran, CJM coordinator from the Church of the Divine Mercy, described the gift of a plant to each parish as a meaningful symbol.

She said it served as an encouragement for participants to return home and continue the mission of caring for creation within their respective parish communities.

The gathering reflected the wider call of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: that prayer for the earth must ultimately lead to conversion in the way people live, consume and relate to the created world.

The potted plants carried home by the parishes offered a simple but fitting reminder of that responsibility. Like the plants themselves, ecological conversion requires attention, commitment and perseverance if it is to take root and grow.

The KL Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry expressed its appreciation to Fr Albet, Fr Anthony and the Church of St John Marie Vianney community for hosting the gathering, as well as to the priests, parishioners and volunteers who contributed to the celebration.

Season of Creation 2026: The living waters

IPOH: Running water became the centrepiece of an evening that invited young people to reflect on their relationship with creation as the St Michael's Church Youth and Creation Justice Ministry gathered on September 4 to celebrate the Season of Creation.

Held in conjunction with the Day of Prayer for the Malaysian Pastoral Convention, the gathering centred on the theme *Living Waters.* Originally planned as an outdoor celebration, the programme was moved indoors due to the haze. The space was transformed to evoke the sights and sounds of nature, with a miniature fountain of running water placed at the base of the altar amidst floral décor, symbolising the abundance of nature and teeming life, inspired by Ezekiel 47:1-12.



Fr Patrick Massang CSsR celebrating the Mass.

A globe placed beneath an image of St Padre Pio represented the Earth, a home entrusted to us for all generations. It challenged participants to consider how the choices we make today will shape the world of tomorrow.

The bilingual *Laudato Si'* Rosary was recited by the youth, followed by the celebration presided over by Fr Patrick Massang, CSsR, who shared a personal reflection drawn from his years of ministry in Sarawak. He recalled the rivers he encountered there as pristine waterways teeming with life, sustaining countless forms of flora and fauna along their banks, as well as communities that depended on them for fresh drinking water.

However, he also witnessed their gradual degradation as development upstream brought soil erosion, debris, chemicals and human waste that polluted the waterways.

His sharing about the rivers of Sarawak offered a lens through which participants could reflect on their own actions. Urbanisation has led humanity to redirect waterways, reshape rivers and harness their energy in the name of development.

Our throwaway culture adds another burden to waterways. Household wastewater, chemicals and harsh detergents pass through drainage and plumbing systems, eventually entering the natural environment. What disappears from our sight does not disappear from nature. Its consequences return to us: polluted water becomes the water we drink; damaged rivers weaken the ecosystems that sustain us; and the destruction of natural systems ultimately threatens human life itself.

Water connects forests, rivers, soil, crops, the sea and human life. To care for water is to care for life itself. The Season of Creation therefore invites us not only to admire the beauty of creation, but also to be converted in the way we live, consume and relate to the Earth.

For the youth, this call is especially significant. They are called to be present and active in breaking the vicious cycle of harm to creation. It is the world in which they will live, work, raise families and build communities.

The celebration was more than an evening programme. It also served as a prelude to the youth camp over the following two days, as planned by parish priest, Fr Aloysius Tan, before his medical leave. The fellowship that followed, over a shared banana-leaf vegetarian meal, became a simple expression of the evening's message: a call to ecological restoration, responsible stewardship and the healing of our common home, because there is no Planet B.

Faith and fellowship around the fire

PENANG: The glow of a campfire, the aroma of food on the barbecue and the sound of laughter created a warm setting for an evening that brought three faith-formation communities together for the first time.

Around 100 children, parents, catechists, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) coordinators and companions gathered for a BBQ and Campfire Evening organised by the Risen Christ Catechism Ministry.

Held from 8.00pm to 10.00pm, the gathering united members of the RCIA, English Catechism and Mandarin Catechism communities as one parish family. People of different ages and backgrounds had the opportunity to meet, share a meal and strengthen bonds beyond their usual classes and sessions.

The evening began with a generous spread of food contributed by families in the spirit of a potluck. The Catechism Ministry sponsored barbecued chicken, sausages, marshmallows and cordial drinks, ensuring there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Catechists also organised a variety of lively games involving children, parents and fellow catechists. Enthusiastic participation soon filled the gathering with laughter, friendly competition and memorable moments.

The activities encouraged families, catechists, RCIA coordinators and companions to mingle and form new friendships. For many of the children, the occasion was especially exciting as it was their first experience of a barbecue and campfire. Gathering around the flames and roasting marshmallows with friends and family became one of the evening's highlights.

Beyond the food and games, the gathering offered the parish community an opportunity to encounter one another outside the more structured setting of Catechism and RCIA sessions. It showed that belonging to a parish family involves sharing not only faith, but also time, friendship and the simple joys of life.

The evening also demonstrated how fellowship can strengthen faith formation. When people pray, learn, laugh and share a meal, they begin to recognise one another not merely as members of separate groups, but as companions journeying together in faith.

The Risen Christ Catechism Ministry expressed its appreciation to Friar Crispus Mosinoh OFM for his support and encouragement. It also thanked the RCIA coordinators and companions, catechists, parents, children and volunteers whose contributions of food, time and effort made the gathering possible.



What began as a simple evening around a barbecue and campfire ended with new friendships and a stronger sense of belonging — a joyful beginning for a closer and more united parish community.

A shared journey through Scripture

Mercy Almeida Stellus

RAWANG: Parishioners in Rawang have expressed their heartfelt appreciation to Richard Ganesh for his dedicated service in conducting Scripture classes that have helped participants deepen their understanding of the Bible and grow in faith.

Recognising the parishioners' desire to know God's Word more deeply, parish priests Fr Simon Labrooy and Fr Jonathan Rao supported the initiative and made it possible for the sessions to be conducted in the parish.

The latest series, held from March to September 2026, explored the Book of Isaiah, the pre-exilic and exilic prophets, the Book of Daniel, and the post-exilic prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Over the years, participants have studied numerous books of both the Old and New Testaments, journeying from Genesis to Revelation.

Agnes King thanked Richard for the time, effort and patience he devoted to preparing and conducting the classes. She said his detailed notes and creative presentations made the lessons easier to follow and more meaningful.

Participants described the sessions as engaging and accessible. The use of illustrations, tables, notes and thoughtfully prepared slides helped them grasp biblical themes and passages that might otherwise have appeared difficult or overwhelming.

Other highlights over the years included an intensive, nearly three-month study of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and a course on Salvation History, which helped participants see how the various books and events of the Bible form part of God's unfolding plan of salvation.

Christie Sagayam said the Scripture studies had enabled participants to grow not only in knowledge and wisdom, but also in humility, simplicity and patience. Through their study of the prophets, they gained a deeper spiritual understanding of how God works through individuals and events to guide His people.

She expressed the hope that similar Scripture studies would be introduced in more parishes, noting that many Catholics long to understand God's Word but need sound guidance to help them engage with it more confidently.

For the participants, the classes became much more than Bible lessons. They were a shared journey of faith, learning, friendship and fellowship, with Richard generously sharing his knowledge and accompanying the group throughout its exploration of Scripture.

The participants also extended their gratitude to Fr Simon and Fr Jonathan for supporting the initiative and allowing the sessions to be held in the parish.

Each class concluded with a simple time of fellowship, further strengthening the bonds among those present and allowing the learning to continue through conversation and mutual encouragement.

As the latest series draws to a close, the group hopes the Scripture studies will continue and eventually reach more parishes, enabling more people to discover the richness of God's Word and allow it to shape their daily lives.



Encountering Christ in the Eucharist



PUCHONG: Sixty-eight parishioners from the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLOG) deepened their understanding and appreciation of the Mass during a half-day formation at the OLOG Pastoral Centre recently.

The formation, themed *Encountering Christ in the Eucharist,* was facilitated by Fr Paul Dass SJ, *pic*.

Fr Paul explained that the celebration of the Eucharist draws not only from the Last Supper shared by Jesus and His disciples, but also from the rich tradition of sacred meals observed by the Jewish people and early Christians.

From its beginnings, Christian worship involved both the breaking of bread and the proclamation of Sacred Scripture. Early Christian communities read from the Jewish Scriptures before gradually incorporating the writings of Christian leaders. Fr Paul pointed to Nehemiah 8:1–8, which describes Ezra reading and explaining the Law to the assembled people, as an early biblical model of the Liturgy of the Word.

Through lively and interactive sessions, participants were guided towards a deeper understanding of the prayers, gestures and actions of the Mass, and their foundations in both the Old and New Testaments.

Fr Paul emphasised that the Mass is a communal act of worship requiring the conscious and active participation of the entire congregation. As the source and summit of Christian life, the Eucharist lies at the heart of the Church and sustains its mission.

The formation concluded with Mass concelebrated by Fr Paul and Fr Raymond Pereira.



Hands that sign, skills that save

PETALING JAYA: In a medical emergency, every second counts. Yet for many members of the Deaf community, essential first-aid education has remained out of reach because of persistent communication barriers. A recent workshop jointly organised by the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), the Catholic Ministry for the Deaf (CMfD) and Columbia Asia Hospital, Petaling Jaya, took an important step towards closing that gap. Thirty Deaf participants gained vital cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and choking-response skills, empowering them to act confidently when a life is at risk.

During the session, participants were guided through the basics of CPR, including chest compressions and the correct response to choking incidents. The training was delivered through Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM), visual demonstrations, and practical exercises, allowing participants to follow the instructions clearly.



The workshop floor bustled with energy as attendees grouped up to practice on specialised training manikins. For most participants, this session marked their first direct exposure to structured emergency response protocols taught in BIM. Deaf participants were guided through the basics of CPR, including chest compressions and the correct response to choking incidents. Medical personnel from Columbia Asia Hospital worked alongside BIM Interpreters to ensure that the information was clearly communicated throughout the workshop.

Organisers emphasised that inclusive emergency preparedness is fundamental to public safety. When medical crises unfold at home, at work or in public spaces, bystanders are the crucial first link in the chain of survival. Ensuring that the Deaf community possesses both the technical proficiency and practical confidence to intervene transforms potential bystanders into active lifesavers.

The programme highlights a crucial lesson for community health care: accessibility requires deliberate, thoughtful adaptation rather than generic outreach. Hands that communicate everyday ideas, stories and expressions are fully capable of sustaining a heartbeat and restoring an airway when trained without barriers.

The organisers expressed gratitude to Ng Wai Kit, CEO of Columbia Asia Hospital Petaling Jaya, for his support and collaboration in making the programme possible.

By combining medical expertise with community-based advocacy, the collaboration between AOHD, Columbia Asia Hospital and the Deaf community served as an example of how inclusive training can empower more people to act confidently in emergencies.



The celebration ends, the mission continues

Bernard Anthony

TAPAH: The call to become missionary disciples does not end when a celebration is over. It begins anew whenever the faithful leave the church ready to listen to God's Word, carry their crosses and reveal Christ through the way they live.

This was the message at the heart of the 131st annual feast of the Church of St Mary celebrated under the theme, *A People for Missionary Discipleship.*

Hundreds of parishioners and visitors gathered for the feast from September 3 to 6. The main celebration on September 5 drew about 450 faithful for praise and worship, the Novena, Mass, Benediction and a candlelight procession.

Parish priest, Fr James Pitchay, was the celebrant and homilist, assisted by Deacon Richard Wilson of Ipoh.

Reflecting on the theme, Fr James reminded the faithful that through the Sacraments, every baptised person is called to become a missionary disciple of Christ. Mission requires a willingness to move beyond what is familiar, encounter others and reveal Christ through one's words and actions.

The Christian mission, he said, should lead people towards repentance, conversion of heart and holiness. This begins by listening attentively to the Word of God and having the courage to put it into practice.

Fr James also reflected on the sub-theme, *Mary, Mother and Queen of Heaven and Earth*, presenting the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model for all missionary disciples.

Chosen by God for a unique mission in His plan of salvation, Mary responded with humility, faith and complete trust: "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to Your word."

Mary did not know everything that lay ahead, yet she said "yes". Her obedience was courageous, opening the way for Christ to enter the world and bringing hope to humanity.

Fr James recalled how Mary carried Christ to her cousin Elizabeth. Her visit brought comfort and joy, demonstrating that missionary discipleship begins by carrying Christ to others, especially those who need encouragement, companionship and hope.

At the foot of the Cross, Mary remained faithful even in sorrow. Through the beloved disciple, Christ entrusted her to the Church as a mother. She continues to accompany the faithful and intercede for them as they face the crosses and uncertainties of life.

Fr James invited the congregation to follow Mary's example and make her response their own: "Let Your will be done in us."

Like Mary, Christians are called to celebrate God's goodness, listen for His voice and walk with others in faith. This demands the courage to accept one's mission, carry one's cross and follow Jesus even when the path is difficult.

Following Mass, the congregation entered a period of quiet adoration during Benediction. The solemn blessing of the Blessed Sacrament brought a sense of peace and spiritual renewal to those gathered.

As the earlier drizzle subsided, a decorated float bearing the Blessed Sacrament and a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary led the faithful on a 45-minute candlelight procession through part of Tapah town.

Participants walked prayerfully while reciting the Rosary. At three points along the route, the procession paused for adoration as Deacon Richard raised the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament and imparted a blessing upon the faithful and the town.

The procession became a public witness of faith and devotion, carrying the presence of Christ beyond the church grounds and into the surrounding community. The congregation walking together also reflected the deeper meaning of the feast: a people united by a common mission to bring Christ's light into their homes, workplaces and communities.

Upon returning to the church, Fr James gave the final blessing and thanked the organisers, volunteers, donors and all who contributed their time, energy, prayers and support towards the celebration.

The evening continued with dinner and fellowship in the adjacent hall, strengthening the bonds among parishioners and visitors.

Fr James also launched the parish's new website, *stmarytapah.com* which provides news and information about the Church of St Mary and its activities.

The feast concluded in a spirit of gratitude and joy, but its invitation remains: to follow Mary's example by listening to God, trusting His will and carrying Christ to others.

Missionary discipleship is not reserved for distant places or extraordinary circumstances. It is lived wherever kindness is offered, the lonely are accompanied, forgiveness is extended and faith is expressed through loving service.

The celebration may have ended, but the mission continues — in every heart willing to say, like Mary, "Let Your will be done in me."

Adding life to our years



Sprightly seniors demonstrate how to ease aches and pains.

PETALING JAYA: Growing older should not simply mean adding years to life, but living those years with health, independence, dignity, purpose and faith.

That message was at the heart of the celebration of the 6th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly (WDGE) at the Church of St Ignatius (SIC), where more than 250 seniors gathered for a half-day programme of fellowship, learning, reflection and prayer.

Held on August 31 at the Costantini Community Centre, the celebration drew a larger-than-usual turnout as the date coincided with the National Day public holiday.

The programme featured praise and worship, a forum on healthy ageing, a spiritual reflection on the WDGE 2026 theme, *I shall never forget you* (Isaiah 49:15), and a concelebrated Mass presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow.

A key feature was the forum, *Growing Older, Living Better: The Journey Towards Healthy Longevity,* which addressed some of the realities facing Malaysia's ageing population.

Moderated by Prof Christopher Ng Kwan Hoong, the forum featured Prof Chan Yoke Mun and Chai Sen Tyng from the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing®) at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Prof Chan, Head of Medical Gerontology and a specialist in dietetics and gerontology, spoke on the importance of nutrition in healthy ageing in her presentation, *Food for Life.*

Chai, a Senior Research Officer specialising in social gerontology, demography, long-term care and social protection for older persons, presented *Beyond Retirement: How to Live Well in Later Life.* Drawing on his research, he explored issues including lifelong learning, aged care, population ageing and changing family and household dynamics in Malaysia.

The discussions underscored a growing concern as Malaysia's population ages: longevity must be accompanied by quality of life. Healthy ageing involves not only physical health and nutrition, but also social connections, community support, independence and a continuing sense of purpose.

It is also a shared responsibility involving older persons themselves, their families, communities and institutions.

The forum prompted a lively response, with participants raising numerous questions and sharing their own experiences of growing older.

The realities of ageing were also explored from a spiritual perspective by Alvin Teoh in his reflection on the WDGE theme. Drawing on everyday situations familiar to seniors, he spoke candidly about some of the challenges they encounter, prompting frequent nods of recognition from the audience.

Yet beneath those challenges, he reminded participants, is God's enduring promise in Isaiah: "I will never forget you."

That assurance, he said, gives believers the strength to face the trials and uncertainties that accompany every stage of life.

The celebration culminated in Mass presided over by Archbishop Julian and concelebrated by SIC parish priest, Fr Thomas Koo CDD, and Fr Andrew Kooi, ecclesiastical assistant of the archdiocesan GEM Ministry.

In his homily, Fr Andrew offered words of prayer and encouragement to the seniors, while Archbishop Julian urged them to embrace this season of their lives rather than withdraw from it.

He encouraged them to go out and live life fully, confident in the knowledge that God continues to love and care for them, regardless of past mistakes or personal inadequacies.

The message reflected the wider spirit of the gathering: ageing need not be regarded merely as a period of diminishing possibilities, but as another season in which life, faith, relationships and service can continue to flourish.

Fellowship continued over lunch, with many participants remaining afterwards to reconnect with friends from other parishes whom they seldom had the opportunity to meet.

Organisers expressed hope that future WDGE celebrations would draw even greater participation from seniors throughout the archdiocese, while encouraging parishes to strengthen programmes that respond to the spiritual, social and practical needs of older members of their communities. **GEM Coordinating Team**

Letters to Editor

A Catholic call to care for stray animals

Dear Editor,

Stray animals live among us, but many suffer from hunger, abandonment, illness and cruelty. They did not choose life on the streets. They are part of our society and, most importantly, part of God's creation.

Scripture reminds us: "The Lord is good to all, compassionate towards all your works" (Psalm 145:9). The *Catechism* also teaches that animals are God's creatures and that we owe them kindness.

Our faith should lead us to action. We can feed strays responsibly, provide clean water, support sterilisation, adopt or foster, report abuse and teach children to treat animals gently. We should also remember suffering animals and their rescuers in our prayers.

The recent case of Wang Wang, a stray mother dog, and her three puppies in Jieyang, China, shows why greater awareness is urgently needed. Their reported abuse and deaths should awaken societies everywhere to reject cruelty and strengthen animal protection.

Following the example of St Francis of Assisi, may we recognise every animal as part of God's creation and respond with compassion.

Dr Edal Sobinia
Catholic and Independent Stray-Animal Rescuer

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

A new ministry of hope for Penang diocese

Christopher Kushi

PENANG: A new chapter of compassion began in Butterworth when Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, formally decreed the Samaritan Missionaries of Hope as an official diocesan ministry.

On September 8, 2026, Cardinal Sebastian also blessed and officially opened the Samaritan Hope Centre in Jalan Kapal. The occasion was especially meaningful as it coincided with the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose life of faith, humility and loving service remains a model for every Christian.

The new ministry is rooted in the Gospel call of Matthew 25:35–36: "For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, a stranger and you welcomed Me, naked and you clothed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you visited Me."

For its foundress, Sr Fatima Emmanuel Sinnapan, every person encountered — poor, homeless, abandoned or forgotten — bears the living face of Christ. Her mission is guided by Jesus' words: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me" (Matthew 25:40).



Cardinal Sebastian Francis with the volunteers.

Her conviction is simple yet demanding: Christians are called to be a missionary people who make Christ's love visible through concrete acts of mercy.

Cardinal Sebastian described Sr Fatima's vocation as "a call within a call". Formerly with the Little Sisters of the Poor, she felt drawn to serve those living on the streets. Since 2018, she has led the Samaritan Hope outreach in Pudu, Kuala Lumpur, accompanying homeless and marginalised people with compassion while affirming their God-given dignity.

In blessing the Samaritan Hope Centre, Cardinal Sebastian prayed that it would become a haven of dignity, safety and renewed hope. Recalling that Jesus Christ Himself had nowhere to lay His head, he reminded those present that every person bears the image of God and possesses an infinite worth that no hardship can erase.

"May this home feed the hungry, may these walls keep out the cold, and may all who pass through this door find the warmth of Christ's love," he said.

The seeds of the Butterworth mission were planted in June 2023, when Sr Fatima began a preliminary outreach at the invitation of Fr Dominic Santhiyagu, parish priest of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Together with parish volunteers, she walked beneath flyovers, along shoplot corridors and into the often-overlooked corners of Butterworth. There, they encountered people rejected by their families, recently released from prison or simply left with nowhere to turn.

Their first offerings were modest — buns and bottles of water. Yet these became openings for conversation, trust and the sharing of lives marked by pain, resilience and hope. What began as the giving of food gradually became an encounter between persons: an assurance to those on the streets that they were seen, heard and not forgotten.

The four-day mission inspired several volunteers to continue the outreach each week. Their commitment, together with a period of discernment involving Cardinal Sebastian and Fr Dominic, eventually led to the decision to establish a soup kitchen and shelter — providing a stable and compassionate presence for homeless people in Butterworth.

"We feed the poor, but the food is only the means. The real mission is to show God's love and help transform lives," Sr Fatima reminds volunteers.

For her, the Church must become a family for those left by the roadside — a community that does not pass by, but stops, listens, tends wounds and helps people rediscover their dignity. It echoes the late Pope Francis' vision of a Church that accompanies, heals and lifts up those in need.

During the launch, street volunteers wearing T-shirts bearing the words "Serving with Love and Compassion" welcomed guests, benefactors and well-wishers. Their joyful and humble presence embodied the spirit of the ministry: faith expressed not only through words, but through hands willing to serve and hearts ready to welcome.

The Samaritan Hope Centre stands as a reminder that hope often begins with something small: a meal, a conversation, an open door or someone willing to stop and listen. It is a story of faith, generosity and the courage to draw near to those whom society often overlooks.

This is not merely social work. It is the Gospel lived on the streets. It is the Church becoming a home for those who have none. It is God's work, carried out through ordinary people who choose to serve with extraordinary love.

From encyclical to action at College General

PENANG: Care for creation moved from reflection to practical action during a session on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, waste management and the possibilities of urban farming.

Led by Dr Mary Bharathy and Magdalene Chiang of the Penang State Creation Justice Commission, the session formed part of a seminar series for the seminarians and priests of College General Regional Major Seminary. It invited the community to view environmental concerns not merely as technical issues, but as matters of faith, and to consider how care for creation can become a concrete expression of responsibility towards our common home.

Dr Bharathy's reflection on *Laudato Si'* emphasised humanity's responsibility for the world entrusted to its care. The encyclical draws attention to the close relationship between the environment, human dignity, social responsibility and the choices made in daily life.

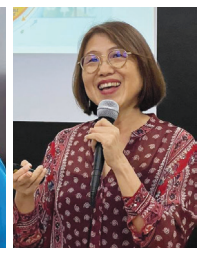
Rather than treating creation merely as a resource for consumption, Christians are called to approach it with gratitude, stewardship and concern for the vulnerable, who are often the most affected by environmental degradation.

Magdalene then moved the discussion from reflection to action through her presentation on waste management and urban farming.

She explained how growing food in cities can reconnect communities with the sources of their food, make productive use of limited space and encourage responsible consumption. Gardens and shared growing spaces can also nurture patience, cooperation and respect for nature.



Dr Mary Bharathy



Magdalene Chiang

Photographs and videos were shown of *Divina Hortus* — "divine garden" — a vegetable garden on the rooftop of the Church of Divine Mercy in Sungai Ara. Images of parishioners tending the garden inspired the College General community, which had begun its own urban farming project earlier this year.

Together, the presentations highlighted that ecological conversion requires an awareness of environmental challenges accompanied by changes in how people live. The principles of *Laudato Si'* can take practical form through simple actions such as cultivating plants, reducing waste, valuing local resources and working together as a community.



Urban farming and waste management were presented as practices that could deepen people's appreciation of creation. In an increasingly urbanised society, even a small garden can serve as a reminder that food, water, soil and human life are interconnected.

The session brought faith, environmental responsibility and community action together. Dr Bharathy offered the broader vision of *Laudato Si'*, while Magdalene showed how that vision could be expressed through practical initiatives.

The message was ultimately one of responsibility and hope: care for our common home is shaped not only by large-scale policies, but also by the daily choices of individuals and communities. **Edmund Low**



EDEN
FUNERAL

013 311 5722
012 648 5722

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

Pre Planning

Discount Up To 30%

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

Diversity is a gift, not a threat

VATICAN: Human diversity should be welcomed as a source of enrichment and growth rather than feared as a danger or threat, Pope Leo XIV said at his weekly General Audience in St Peter's Square on September 16.

Continuing his catechesis on the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes,* the Pope reflected on its second chapter, devoted to the human community.

The document identifies growing interdependence as a defining feature of the modern world. However, Pope Leo said this must develop into genuine communion founded on respect for the dignity of every person.

This message is especially urgent amid rapid technological advances, social media and artificial intelligence. While these developments create opportunities and bridge distances, they can also make relationships more virtual and less personal.

The Pope also warned against relying on algorithms to make decisions that properly belong to the human conscience.

"Ensuring that social relationships have real substance and personal depth is, in this regard, the contribution that the Christian community seeks to offer," he said.

Christians, he added, are called to recognise humanity as one family and treat others as brothers and sisters, guided by the commandment to love God and neighbour.

Drawing on *Gaudium et Spes,* Pope Leo said differences among people and cultures are not obstacles to unity but resources for mutual enrichment. Conflict and violence arise when sin distorts attitudes and actions, turning differences into sources of suspicion and division.

To counter this, he encouraged greater openness to "the logic of reciprocity, sharing and care".

The Pope stressed that personal fulfilment and social development are closely connected. Social institutions must therefore place the human person at their centre and work towards the common good — creating conditions in which individuals and communities can flourish.

This vision demands respect for every human life, the protection of human dignity and the rejection of discrimination. It also challenges society to move beyond individualism and embrace responsibility, participation and solidarity.

Calling the Council's vision of humanity as a "community of people" a valuable legacy, Pope Leo urged Christians to assess political and social developments through the lens of human dignity.

"The future of humanity depends on each person's commitment to collaborate with God and with their brothers and sisters in building a more humane world," he concluded. **Vatican News**

Java dioceses call for catechesis 'with families'

BANDUNG: Catechetical commissions from seven Catholic dioceses in Java have called for a shift from "catechesis for families" to "catechesis with families", recognising households as active partners in faith formation rather than simply recipients of Church programmes.

The call emerged from the September 8–11 Gathering of the Catechetical Commissions of the Java Region at Bumi Silih Asih, the pastoral centre of the Diocese of Bandung in West Java.

Held under the theme *Walking with Families, Making Catechesis Missionary,* the gathering brought together 57 representatives from seven dioceses, the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI) and various pastoral ministries.

Participants said catechesis must extend beyond the transmission of doctrine to include personal encounter, the witness of daily life and accompaniment rooted in families' actual circumstances.

They recommended stronger cooperation between diocesan catechetical and family ministry commissions through regular coordination and joint programmes. Dioceses were also encouraged to draw upon catechists, married couples, psychologists, educators and pastoral workers, while sharing personnel and experience across diocesan boundaries.

Among the proposals was a regional Catechesis with Families module addressing diverse realities, including economic hardship,



young families, parents struggling to pass on the faith, households raising Generation Alpha children and families facing particular vulnerabilities.

Participants noted that many Catholics live far from churches and have limited access to priests or parish programmes. In these communities, catechesis cannot depend solely on church buildings, fixed schedules or the regular presence of clergy. The home itself must become a place of prayer, encounter and faith formation.

Family prayer, the blessing of children by parents and praying the Rosary were highlighted as everyday forms of catechesis. Faith formation, participants stressed, should not end with the reception of Baptism, First Communion or Confirmation.

The role of the catechist must also evolve from that of a teacher alone to a witness, educator and companion who journeys with families.

Particular attention was given to single mothers and other vulnerable households. Participants called for pastoral responses shaped by listening, inclusion and accompaniment rather than judgement.

The gathering also examined how social media, artificial intelligence and algorithms are reshaping family relationships. Parents were encouraged to develop digital literacy and strengthen communication with their children amid growing concerns over loneliness, anxiety and excessive digital engagement.

Concluding that the Church needs a change in approach rather than simply more programmes, participants called for catechesis that listens to families and helps them live their faith amid the realities of everyday life.

Each diocese will develop follow-up plans according to its pastoral needs. The next Java Region gathering is scheduled for January 13–15, 2027, in East Jakarta. **RVA**

Asian Catholic media urged to put mission before ego

QUEZON CITY: Asian Catholic communicators have been reminded that digital mission is about leading people to Christ — not chasing followers, likes or personal recognition.

More than 100 communicators from across Asia attended the first Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly at the *Radio Veritas Asia* headquarters in Quezon City, Philippines, from September 10 to 13.

The assembly was organised by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and Radio Veritas Asia, with support from the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication.

In his homily at the closing Mass on September 13, Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, FABC vice-president, challenged participants to enter the digital world "not merely as influencers, but as missionary disciples".

"Your mission is not simply to gather followers. It is to build relationships, create spaces of encounter and help people journey together," he said at the Cathedral-Shrine of the Good Shepherd.

The cardinal said a digital missionary's first task is not speaking but listening. He urged communicators to "listen before you react" and "listen before you judge".

Bishop Marcelino Antonio Maralit Jr, chairman of the FABC Office of Social Communications, similarly reminded participants that online engagement should ultimately lead people towards a deeper encounter with Christ.

"Social media is an appetiser; the Eucharist is the destination," he said.

Nataša Govekar, director of the theological-pastoral department of the Dicastery for Communication, called on digital missionaries to become "leaders of communion" rather than mere influencers, following Christ, the "Perfect Communicator".

"No computational system, however sophisticated, can create a heart that gives itself, or a conscience that discerns good from evil," she said.

The challenge of placing mission before ego also emerged during the assembly's breakout discussions.

Indonesian participant Sara Tunas said the pursuit of engagement, likes and views can overshadow the original purpose of digital ministry.

"It's easy for God to give us followers," she said. "But if God gives us this amount of followers, that means that, for God, that's enough for you to go."

Sara also highlighted the difficulty of encouraging young Catholics to take part in digital mission and the need to bridge generational divides online.

Joel Mendonsa, 25, from Goa, India, said digital missionaries must learn from one another as they seek to know and share the Gospel.

"Everyone feels like they want to be seen. They want popularity, fame and recognition," he said. "What we are forgetting is that the mission is of Christ."

Digital missionaries, he added, "should always point towards Jesus, not towards us". **ucanews.com**



Catholic digital missionaries and communication leaders take part in a panel discussion during the Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly 2026 on Sept 13, 2026. (LiCAS News/Mark Saludes)

Hate speech is not freedom of expression

NEW YORK: The Holy See's new Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Archbishop Christophe Z. El Kassis, has called for communication to be freed from prejudice, resentment and hatred in order to build peace.

The archbishop presented his letter of appointment to UN Secretary-General António Guterres on September 16. A day later, he delivered his first address at the Global Conference on Promoting Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Tolerance in Countering Hate Speech in New York.

Archbishop El Kassis reaffirmed the Holy See's position that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses an inalienable dignity that no ideology of hatred can diminish.

"From this foundational truth flows the moral imperative to reject every form of intolerance, discrimination and hate speech that wounds the human family and undermines the conditions for peaceful coexistence," he said.

Hate speech directed at individuals or communities because of their religion, race, nationality or other characteristics contradicts the commandment to love one's neighbour, he added. It also "poisons public discourse, inflames division and too often prepares the ground for violence and persecution".

Quoting Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas,* Archbishop El Kassis said: "The first contribution we can make towards a more humane civilisation is to be mindful of our words."

Words possess tremendous power, he said, and "disarming" them is an essential first step towards fostering dialogue, tolerance, respect and social peace.

However, the archbishop cautioned that words alone cannot build peace. Authentic tolerance is neither indifference nor relativism, but an active recognition of every person's dignity and freedom of conscience. It also requires patience, mutual understanding and the rejection of stereotypes.

"In this spirit, the Holy See promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an essential path towards overcoming prejudice and building a better world for all," he said.

While affirming freedom of expression as a fundamental right, Archbishop El Kassis stressed that it carries responsibilities. Speech deliberately intended to provoke hatred or violence cannot claim the protection of liberty, he said, because it erodes the conditions in which genuine freedom can flourish.

Echoing Pope Leo's appeal for communication capable of listening and amplifying the voices of the weak, the archbishop concluded: "Let us disarm words and we will help to disarm the world." **Vatican News**



The Church, nation-building and moral leadership



Religious and laity sharing their experience during the Conversation in the Spirit.

Dr Charles Bertille

The Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026) was a moment of celebration and thanksgiving for the journey of the local Church. Representatives from Sabah, Sarawak and *Semenanjung* gathered as one Malaysian Church for the first time in 63 years after the formation of Malaysia in 1963. The MPC was a catalytic event. It invited all to read "the signs of the times" and to hear anew the Risen Lord's call to "cast out into the deep". In Malaysia today, that call leads the Church towards a more deliberate commitment to nation-building and moral leadership.

For many, a poignant moment was the opening Mass at Sibu Gateway. Caught in the sudden lashing rain, many huddled together, sharing umbrellas and making room under what little cover they had. Though strangers, they cared for one another without instruction. It was an ordinary and yet moving moment. Others packed together on the covered podium around the celebrant. As someone reflected later, "there was no longer separation between sanctuary and people, clergy and laity – we were all one up there."

The signs did not go unnoticed – the rain, the resilience, the solidarity and the faith set the tone for what was to come. It showed what the Malaysian Church can offer the nation: a community in which people do not retreat into separate groups when difficulty comes but stand together.

The Dynamis of the Spirit

The following morning, the Minister of National Unity, Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang, reminded the assembly that the Christian command to love one's neighbour has public consequences. Unity does not arise automatically. It requires commitment, mutual understanding, respect and trust. His challenge was direct: Christians can build bridges where others build walls.

Archbishop Emeritus John Ha then traced the recent history of the Churches in Malaysia's three regions. Their paths were different, but each contained "seeds of synodality". In *Semenanjung,* bishops encouraged the *Aggiornamento* of 1976 and the Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Conventions (PMPC). In Sabah, lay leaders responded to the expulsion of missionaries in the 1970s by forming the PAX Assembly. In Sarawak, Vatican II's renewed understanding of the Church as the People of God encouraged the laity to embrace their baptismal vocation.

These initiatives emerged amid political tension and social upheaval: the communist insurgency, the racial violence of 1969, the expulsion of missionaries, *Konfrontasi,* and the fall of Saigon. The pioneers did not wait for ideal conditions. They discerned what faithfulness required in their own time. Their witness places a question before us: what events are shaping Malaysia now, and how will the Church respond?

Archbishop John urged the assembly to dream and trust the dynamics of the Holy Spirit, the divine power quietly at work in the growth of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:26-28). When participants were asked where the Church could contribute to nation-building and what the Spirit might be saying, their responses were rich and multifaceted: form young leaders; start a Catholic college; leave the walls of the church; *turun padang;* become bridges among peoples; strengthen families; and witness to Christ's love. These convictions also exposed real constraints, including limited resources and leadership, the weakening role of mission schools, and anxiety about growing religious exclusivism. Our discernment must hold both the call and the constraints together.

Learning to walk together

What happens when the road we have been taking does not help us reach the people we intend to serve? Cardinal Pablo Virgilio Ambo David of the Philippines addressed the gap between pastoral ideals and people's lived reality. Drawing on the Diocese of Kalookan's experience, he described a conversion in pastoral approach: encounter people as persons rather than cases; begin with relationships rather than programmes; and become a Church willing to listen and learn from the ground.

The diocese established 'mission stations' in neighbourhoods and squatter settlements around its parishes. These became laboratories of presence, enabling the Church to draw close to families, learn from their experience and accompany them. Some MPC participants recognised in this a *gereja bergerak,* a Church on the move. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, pastoral workers discovered that Christ is already present in difficult situations. Families are not merely recipients of care; they possess gifts through which they can accompany other families. Synodality begins when the Church recognises and calls forth these gifts.

Dr Bridget Welsh brought the discussion firmly into the Malaysian context. She described the country's deeper haze as a moral crisis reflected in institutional failures, poverty, disinformation, social fragmentation, the exclusion of migrants and stateless people, the hardship experienced by Indigenous communities, and rising mental health concerns. Many young Malaysians know little about the religious festivals of their neighbours. Ethnic and religious identities are increasingly mobilised for political ends, while artificial intelligence can accelerate the spread of falsehoods.

The Church cannot remain outside these realities. Nation-building requires more than occasional statements. It asks parishes and Christian communities to educate, organise, accompany and widen participation, especially for people whose voices are seldom heard. Moral leadership is credible when it protects human dignity, strengthens social trust and helps citizens act for the common good.

A Church that continues to learn

The MPC was pathbreaking because it brought together all the dioceses and may have laid the foundation for a future Malaysian ecclesial assembly. More importantly, it moved beyond a clergy-centred gathering towards collective listening and discernment as one People of God. Bishops, clergy, religious and laity sat in small groups, spoke honestly and listened for the Spirit through every baptised member. This was a visible exercise of the *sensus fidei:* the Church learning to recognise God's movement through the faith of the whole community.

Synodality, however, cannot be reduced to a successful event. It is "the way of being Church" that must shape ordinary relationships, decisions and structures. Conversation within the Church forms communities in communal discernment; conversation with society develops the capacity for civic and interreligious dialogue. Both are necessary for a missionary synodal Church.

The convention also revealed absences that future gatherings must address. Orang Asli representatives were missing. Participants asked about young activists, lay movements, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees. Others questioned why Bahasa Malaysia was not used more extensively. A religious sister asked whether the Church could speak more clearly about haze and large development projects that displace communities and damage the environment. Another group proposed that work for creation justice should learn from Indigenous wisdom and the close relationship between community, land and life.

These questions do not diminish the achievement of the MPC. They identify where the next stage of synodality must go. A Church that listens must also notice who is absent, examine how its processes distribute voice, and create conditions for wider participation.

Casting out into the deep

Each of us knows the shallow waters in which we feel secure: Sunday Mass, parish committees, charitable work and familiar ministries. These are valuable, but the Gospel call to cast out into the deep asks where Christ is leading us beyond what is comfortable. Synodality therefore requires conversion in relationships, processes and structures.

The convention itself offered lessons for that conversion. A priest spoke candidly about declining fraternity in *Semenanjung* and the need to recover the 'joy of encounter'. Some participants felt that less time could have been spent on the orientation and more on listening to the findings from the three regions. The decision not to release the notes summarising group discernment caused concern, especially after participants had called for transparency and trust. The bishops' concluding reflections were brief, but the assembly ended without a sufficiently clear common direction or set of next steps.

These shortcomings are embraced as part of our learning as a local Church. Synodality requires an understanding of processes and pedagogy, good facilitation, transparent communication, and accountability. People need to know how their contributions will be synthesised, who will act on them, and how progress will be reported.

Several practical responsibilities now emerge. The Bishops' Conference can study its working structures to explore how commissions can better coordinate their work, listen more consistently to local communities, and engage national concerns. As Archbishop Julian Leow, President of MPC2026 mentioned, resources must follow the dreams voiced at the convention. The Conference of Religious can bring religious communities together within each region to discern their prophetic contribution. Dioceses and parishes can create sustained spaces for families, young people, Indigenous communities and those at the social margins to shape pastoral priorities. One participant expressed the desired change simply: she wanted to return home and explore with her parish priest how they might care for families and communities, rather than concentrating mainly on buildings and fundraising.

Listening gives each baptised person room to develop a prophetic voice, while prayer teaches us to rely on the dynamis of the Spirit. The Church's contribution to Malaysia will become credible when we are willing to take risks, ask difficult questions, try new pastoral approaches and move towards people who experience exclusion or hardship. Moral leadership grows through such presence. Nation-building advances when communities cross ethnic, religious and social boundaries to uphold the dignity of every person.

The road ahead will be long. We will need courage, humility and companionship. Yet the MPC has shown that the Church in Sabah, Sarawak and *Semenanjung* can gather, listen and discern as one body. The task now is to translate that experience into relationships, structures and public action. This is how we cast out into the deep: trusting that the Risen Lord is already there, and allowing the Spirit to make us instruments of unity, justice and hope in Malaysia.

Dr Charles *is a lay person who has been serving in various missions the past 30 years. He recently completed his doctorate in theology, specialising in synodality. He lives in Seremban with his wife and mother.*

The essence of being human



Dancing with Dementia

Dr Cecilia Chan

I spend a great deal of time with people living with dementia, and I consider it a privilege. Being with them has taught me immensely about life. It has also forced me to reflect on my own life, my values, and my vulnerabilities as a human being.

Recently, a volunteer from abroad spent a month at our centre. As a teacher, she was naturally enthusiastic and keen to ensure that our clients completed the tasks and activities planned for them.

One day, she was working with one of our clients—let us call her Su—on a puzzle.

As the volunteer continued encouraging Su to complete the puzzle, Su became increasingly disoriented. What began as encouragement gradually became pressure. The more the volunteer insisted, the more distressed Su became.

Soon, Su began speaking in Malay — a language she rarely used and one that the volunteer could not understand. Her tone of voice changed. Her body language became tense. She was clearly uncomfortable.

The volunteer continued speaking to her in Chinese, trying to redirect her back to the puzzle. But the more she insisted, the more Su responded in Malay.

I decided to intervene. I gently invited Su to sit with me on the sofa and have some cut apples.

Without hesitation, she got up and joined me. Almost immediately, she became calm.

Later, the volunteer asked me how I had managed to do that.

She could not understand how Su could go from being distressed and agitated to calm within such a short time.

I told her: "She can feel your irritation. When you are calm, she feels safe enough to become calm too. You cannot expect her to regulate herself when the person beside her is anxious, frustrated, or upset. She feels it deeply."

If we are honest with ourselves, we will recognise this in our own lives.

Imagine that you have worked incredibly hard for a promotion. You believe you have earned it. Yet, the promotion is given to a colleague whom you feel has not worked nearly as hard as you have.

You come home feeling devastated. You share the news with your spouse, hoping to be heard and supported.



(Magnific photo)

But instead, your spouse tells you: "You are being too emotional. Just calm down."

Honestly, how would that make you feel? Would you suddenly become calm? Or would you feel even more frustrated, misunderstood, and alone? What would your spouse need to say or do for you to feel heard, understood, and supported?

Most of us know the answer.

We do not calm down simply because someone tells us to.

We calm down when we feel safe. We calm down when someone listens. We calm down when we feel understood.

Yet, when it comes to people living with cognitive changes such as dementia, we often forget this very basic human truth

How often do we insist that they should calm down when we ourselves are irritated, impatient, or annoyed?

How can we expect another person to regulate their emotions when we have not first learned to regulate our own?

On another occasion, Su had been quietly working on a puzzle when she suddenly stood up and walked towards the pantry.

She picked up a container and carefully placed the puzzle pieces inside. As she did so, she muttered that she needed to cook rice.

Then she began walking around the room, looking intently at her surroundings.

Her eyes settled on the fire extinguisher. She walked towards it and began fiddling with it.

From the outside, her actions could easily have been labelled as confusion, agitation, or simply another "behavioural problem" associated with dementia.

But what if we paused?

What if, instead of trying to bring Su back into our reality, we made the effort to enter hers?

It was 5.00pm. Perhaps, in Su's reality, she had suddenly remembered that it was time to prepare dinner for her family. And the first thing she needed to do was cook the rice.

The puzzle pieces became the rice. The container became the bowl or pot. And the fire extinguisher had perhaps become the tap she needed to wash the rice before cooking it.

Suddenly, her behaviour was no longer meaningless. It made perfect sense.

This is the power of trying to understand the world of a person living with dementia.

When we look at behaviour only from our own reality, we may see confusion, resistance, or a problem that needs to be managed.

But when we pause and try to understand what the person may be experiencing, our perspective changes.

Instead of asking: "Why is she behaving like this?"

Perhaps we should ask: "What is she trying to do?"

"What does this mean in her world?"

"How can I support her?"

Understanding does not mean allowing unsafe behaviour. It does not mean simply agreeing with everything a person does. It means looking beyond the behaviour to understand the person's needs, memories, routines, emotions, fears, and intentions.

When we understand, we can support rather than control. We can guide rather than correct. We can reassure rather than argue. We can preserve dignity rather than unintentionally belittle.

Sometimes, all it takes is a willingness to pause, step into another person's world, and see the situation through their eyes.



(Magnific/jcomp)

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

The art of simply being

Perhaps the deeper lesson is not only about dementia.
Perhaps it is about what it means to be human.
What would happen if we made more effort to look beyond the surface and see the whole person?
What if we allowed ourselves simply to be — making space to be present without the constant busyness of doing, fixing, correcting, or setting agendas?
What if we met people with acceptance?
What if we listened from the heart?
What if we withheld judgment about their mannerisms, their words, their confusion, or their way of making sense of the world?
Perhaps we need to cultivate what is sometimes called a "don't-know mind."
A willingness to let go of the assumption that we always know what is happening.
A willingness to remain curious.
A willingness to listen.
A willingness to enter another person's reality without immediately trying to correct it.
From that place, we may begin to enjoy the often-playful exchanges of language and meaning without becoming overly concerned about logic, literal interpretations, or whether what is being said is factually correct.
For a little while, reason and rationality do not have to rule the interaction.
And perhaps that can be quite liberating.
It may even allow us to see the nature of relationships in a fresh way.
We begin to realise that our sense of autonomy and separateness may not be as absolute as we imagine.
We are deeply interconnected.
We affect one another.
Our anxiety can become another person's anxiety.
Our calm can become another person's calm.
Our presence can make another person feel safe — or unsafe.
If we are truly honest with ourselves, we know that when someone empathises with us and genuinely listens to what we have to say, we feel a deep connection with them.
But when someone repeatedly insists on their own views without making any effort to understand our perspective, we become emotionally drained.
We feel lonely.
We feel frustrated.
We feel unseen.
People living with dementia are no different.
They may experience the world differently from us, but they still need what every human being needs.
To feel safe.
To feel understood.
To feel accepted.
To feel that they matter.
Do we want to build bridges or build walls?
Perhaps when we recognise the shared elements of our humanity — our fears, our vulnerabilities, our need for connection and belonging — we can become more open to understanding those who are living with cognitive changes.
Perhaps dementia is not only asking us to understand a disease.
Perhaps it is asking us to become better human beings.
To slow down.
To listen more deeply.
To let go of the need to always be right.
And, sometimes, simply to have the courage to enter another person's world.
Because sometimes, that is where true connection begins.



(NCSM facebook)


(NCSM facebook)

Accompanying families through cancer

Bernard Anthony

KAMPUNG PANDAN: For cancer patients who must travel to Kuala Lumpur for treatment, the journey often brings an added burden — finding safe and affordable accommodation in an unfamiliar city.

At a time when patients and their families should be able to focus on treatment and recovery, many must also contend with travelling expenses, rising living costs and the difficulty of securing a suitable place to stay. For families already experiencing financial hardship, these practical concerns can deepen the emotional strain caused by cancer.

The newly opened NCSM–SSVP Good Health Home of Hope seeks to ease that burden by offering underprivileged outstation patients and their caregivers a welcoming place to stay, free of charge, while they undergo treatment at hospitals in and around the capital.

Located at No. 46A, Lorong Kampung Pandan, Kuala Lumpur, the transit home was officially opened on September 8, a year after a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) and the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP) Conference of the Sacred Heart.

Archbishop Emeritus of Kuala Lumpur, Most Rev Murphy Pakiam officiated at the opening by unveiling a commemorative plaque at the entrance of the home, honouring those whose generosity and commitment brought the project to fruition.

The event brought together representatives of NCSM and SSVP, community leaders, government officials and religious leaders of different faiths — a reflection of the shared conviction that care for the sick and vulnerable transcends religious and social boundaries.

Their presence also highlighted the importance of partnerships in responding to needs that no single organisation can address alone. By bringing together expertise in cancer care, the Church's ministry to the poor and the generosity of individuals, the initiative has transformed a house into a place of refuge and compassion.

Among those present were Dr Waramiah Ramlan, head of the Non-Communicable Disease Unit of the Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya Health Department; Zuriah Abu Bakar of PEMADAM; Dr Wong of Hospital Ampang; Deputy Chief Sub-Inspector Hairul Izhar of Pudu Police Station; NCSM president Dato' Dr Saunthari Somasundram; NCSM managing director Prof Dr Muralitharan Munisamy; SSVP national spiritual adviser Fr Frederick Joseph; and SSVP Conference of the Sacred Heart president Peter Das.

Also present were Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam, parish priest of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and administrator of the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health, Kampung Pandan, and Dr A. Leela, who donated the house for the project.

Peter said the initiative reflected SSVP's continuing commitment to serving people in need — not only by providing financial assistance, but also by responding to their physical and medical needs.

Seventeen years ago, the Conference of the Sacred Heart helped establish the NKF–Good Health Dialysis Centre. The new Home of Hope is its second major healthcare initiative, offering accommodation to cancer patients from outside Kuala Lumpur while they receive treatment in the city.

The project represents another step in the conference's efforts to respond to poverty in its many forms. Vulnerability, those present were reminded, is not always measured by the lack of food or money. It can also be experienced through illness, fear, displacement and the uncertainty faced by families seeking treatment far from home.

Dr Saunthari said the opening was not simply about providing a building, but reaffirming NCSM's commitment to supporting cancer patients and their families — a mission it has carried out since its founding in 1966.

Cancer, she said, affects not only the patient but the entire family. For those travelling from other states, the cost of transport, food and accommodation can compound the anxiety and financial strain already caused by the illness.

The Home of Hope seeks to lessen those worries by providing patients and caregivers with comfort, support and dignity during a difficult period in their lives. It allows families to remain close to one another during treatment, without the additional fear of being unable to afford a place to stay.

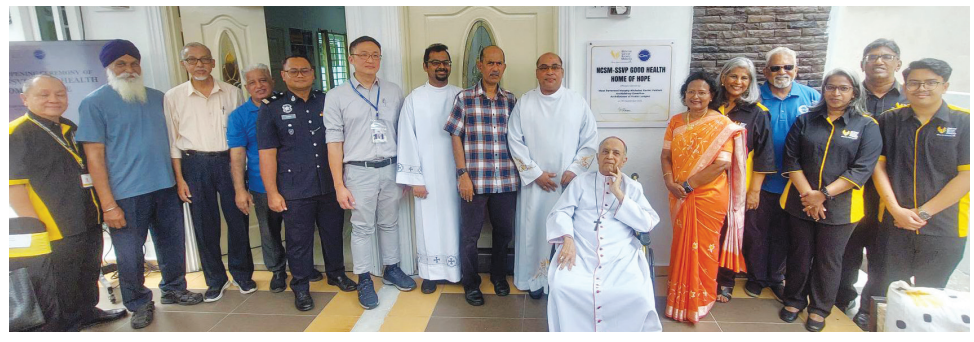
"This place is more than comfortable accommodation. It is a place of care, dignity and hope," she said, adding that such an undertaking would not have been possible without the support of partners such as SSVP and the generosity of Dr Leela.

Dr Saunthari also thanked the Church and priests for their continued partnership with NCSM in serving the wider community. Representatives of the police assured those present that they would help safeguard the home and its residents.

Dr Leela, a retired medical doctor who spent decades in public service, said her decision to bequeath the double-storey house to the SSVP Conference of the Sacred Heart was her way of giving back to society in gratitude for the many blessings she and her family had received from God.

Having devoted much of her life to caring for others through the medical profession, her gift ensures that the house will continue to serve those facing illness. What was once a family property will now become a temporary home for people navigating one of the most challenging periods of their lives.

She also thanked senior SSVP member S. Perry for laying the groundwork and liaising with NCSM to ensure the home would be used to serve those in need.



Fr Frederick reflected on how the mission of SSVP has developed since its founding in Paris in 1833. While the society remains committed to meeting immediate needs such as providing food, it is also moving into new areas of service that help people rebuild their lives and preserve their dignity.

After 193 years, he said, SSVP was entering another sphere of service — one concerned not only with feeding people, but also with helping them to live with hope and dignity.

He highlighted the five virtues at the heart of Vincentian spirituality — simplicity, humility, gentleness, selflessness and zeal — and said these values were evident in the Conference of the Sacred Heart's willingness to venture into healthcare support.

SSVP's ministries have grown to include homes for underprivileged children, the Ozanam Retirement Village in Taiping for senior citizens, and now accommodation for those undergoing cancer treatment.

Fr Frederick congratulated the conference members for putting Vincentian spirituality into action and thanked NCSM for its partnership and Dr Leela for her generosity. Their efforts, he said, demonstrated how faith must find concrete expression in service, especially towards those who are suffering.

Msgr Stanislaus said the project showed what could be achieved when people united in compassion.

"We encounter poor people everywhere, and we cannot do it alone. We need the assistance of one another," he said.

He observed that SSVP had grown from responding to the immediate needs of the poor to accompanying those suffering inwardly through pain, illness and uncertainty. Such suffering might not always be visible, but it called for the same compassion, attentiveness and willingness to serve.

He described the initiative as an expression of communion between the Church and others who share the desire to reach out to the poor, the sick and those carrying unseen burdens.

The date of the opening, September 8, was especially significant as the Church celebrated the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"Mary, as the Mother of Jesus, gives hope to many people," Msgr Stanislaus said, encouraging those present to continue serving the poor and needy in the same spirit.

Just as Mary accompanied her Son through moments of joy and suffering, the home stands as an invitation to accompany patients and their families with tenderness and faith. Its mission is not merely to provide a service, but to assure those confronting cancer that they remain seen, valued and supported.

The fully furnished transit home has five rooms with a total of 10 beds. It provides basic facilities, including a kitchen where residents may prepare their own meals. Accommodation is offered free of charge to underprivileged outstation cancer patients and their caregivers receiving treatment at major healthcare institutions such as Hospital Ampang and Hospital Kuala Lumpur.

NCSM also shared information on the support available at the home and reiterated its commitment to bringing cancer care and assistance closer to communities in need.

A simple bed, a secure room and a place to prepare a meal may appear ordinary, but for a family far from home and facing the uncertainty of illness, they can become powerful signs of kindness and solidarity.

The Good Health Home of Hope offers patients and their families not only shelter, but also safety, companionship and reassurance throughout their treatment — reminding them that, even in illness, they do not have to walk alone.

Outstation cancer patients seeking accommodation may contact NCSM at its toll-free number, 1800-88-1000, for enquiries and room reservations.



The newly opened NCSM–SSVP Good Health Home of Hope. (NCSM facebook)

‘A mysterious call’ after a visit to a soup kitchen



Sunday Observer

Anil Netto



It arrived as a “very mysterious” call within a call for Sr Fatima Emmanuel, *pic*. “One day, I went to Carl’s Kitchen (a soup kitchen that served the homeless until 2018 in Kuala Lumpur) to hand over something from the Little Sisters.”

She says she had invited Cardinal Soter Fernandez (but of course) to come along. “We were sitting and talking while I was distributing mooncakes. While there, I saw the tired, helpless faces among the people.”

Back home, while praying, Sr Fatima recalls she heard a ‘voice’. “I am suffering. Can you help me?”

That is how her new journey began.

On September 8, the Samaritan Hope, founded by Sr Fatima, opened its latest homeless shelter, this time at 31 Jalan Kapal, Butterworth.

The group was founded in 2018 to support homeless and hungry people through daily meals, supplies, medical care and rehabilitation. The goal is to help them reintegrate into society.

Sr Fatima and her volunteer Molly arrived in Butterworth in 2023 to assess conditions on the streets and look for a possible site for their latest home

Their move was at the invitation of Fr Dominic Santhiyagu, the parish priest of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Butterworth, who doubles up as spiritual director of the home.

Since her arrival three years ago, she has drawn volunteers for her street missions and surveys. Thus far, about 20-25 volunteers have signed up.

For Sr Fatima, the formation of the volunteers’ mindset is key. She tells them: “We are trying to see Christ in the poorest of the poor instead of judging them. Just go as a brother and sister to them and share the blessings God has given to you.”

“It is like a family. Not everyone is perfect. So don’t judge them — because you don’t know their history.”

The operations of the shelter and soup kitchen will come under a society run by a board of directors, including a representative from Penang, as well as staff and volunteers

Cardinal Sebastian Francis also announced the establishment of the Samaritan Missionaries of Hope as a ministry in the Penang diocese.

This group, under a ministry head, aims to enlist 15 permanently committed members who will profess simply private vows — like poverty, obedience and chastity — before a bishop or priest for a minimum of five years. These could be renewable for three to five years.

They will live together as a community, says Sr Fatima. Already there are several aspirants and others who are still discerning.

Eventually, the group hopes to achieve acknowledgement as a “society of apostolic life” (diocesan right) from the Holy See.

Sr Fatima had previously served for 15 years in Africa and Turkey under the Little Sisters of the Poor.

But after her call within a call, she stayed at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre for three years. “It was then that I saw the real misery of the homeless. I saw the real need. Their basic needs were not there: no proper food, no table to eat, or place to bathe.”

There was no turning back, and she moved on from the Little Sisters on this new mission.

Today, Samaritan Hope operates a women’s shelter in Kelana Jaya, where several women are encouraged to be engaged in part-time work or catering. Another centre for the homeless in Pudu provides meals for about 200 street people a day.

Then came the invitation to Butterworth. The centre, a double-storey shop lot, was declared open on the parish feast day on September 8 by Cardinal Sebastian Francis.

Displayed prominently inside the shelter is a tablet with a Scripture passage that guides its operation: “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink” (Matthew 25: 35) and an exhortation: “May we serve You in the poor with love, compassion and humility.”

In a sense, Sr Fatima is continuing in a different form the ministry to the poor that the late Sr Colette Selvam, IJ, began when she set up a learning centre in Butterworth over 30 years ago.

That centre catered to poor children from an urban pioneer settlement in Mak Mandin until it was demolished and the villagers displaced. Sr Colette passed away in Cheras last November.

At the official opening of Sr Fatima’s latest shelter, Cardinal Sebastian recalled the work of “Sr Colette of Mak Mandin” and asked for her prayers for this new venture.

It felt like the passing of the baton, with a new generation of volunteers seeking out the poor beyond the Church walls. Pope Francis’ call for the church to be like a “field hospital” also sprang to mind.

This tradition of reaching out to the poor goes back even further. In the First Century (Acts 6:1-6), the early Church commissioned seven people “known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” to ensure that widows and the poor received daily food allocations.

Direct aid to the poor — direct practical service *(diakonia)* — became an essential obligation of the church rather than an optional extra. (The English word deacon comes directly from the Greek word *diakonos,* which is closely related to *diakonia*.)

“Ultimately, God is concerned about the poor,” says Sr Fatima, “and to look for the lost, we have to be on the streets, as they are unlikely to be around the church.”

Anil *is a freelance writer and activist based in Penang. He believes we are all called to build the kingdom of God in this world.*

The fourth man in the fire



Yours ‘faith’fully

Georgina Fernandez

Jane was exhausted. In just three short months, the bottom had fallen out of her world, and life as she knew it changed completely and irrevocably. Her husband of 10 years had suddenly passed away, leaving her with three children aged eight, six, and two. To add to her misery, she discovered that her husband had racked up a tremendous amount of debt in failed business ventures that she was expected to pay off now that he was no more. She was a stay-at-home mother, having given up a career in banking to bring up their children. Overnight, Jane found herself in the toughest season of her life. What was she to do? Desperate, she turned to prayer, asking the Lord to help her in what seemed like an impossible situation. Hundreds of thousands in debt, three small children to care for, and no way of bringing in an income. Days turned into weeks, and the creditors were barking close at her heels. The bank called almost every other day, and the bills just kept racking up. Jane was desperate.

“Lord, where are You?”, she cried. *“I can’t see You, feel You or hear You. I feel alone. Your Word says that You are close to the broken hearted* (Psalm 34:18). *It also says that You will be with me when I walk through the fire and that it would not burn me or consume me* (Isaiah 43:2). *I don’t know what to do! Please help me. Hear my cry.”*

How many of us, like Jane, have been in impossible life situations at one time or another? Almost all, I can guarantee. We pray, we cry, and we rant at God when we don’t get the answers we want, yet God promises us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

The Book of Daniel tells us of the story of three brave Jewish men – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – who stood up against King Nebuchadnezzar and found themselves in a fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had erected a massive golden statue in the plain of Dura and decreed that everyone must bow down to it. As soon as his heralds went out into the land and proclaimed this to all his subjects, the people of every language and tribe there fell to their knees and worshipped the statue. However, there were three Jewish men who refused to. King Nebuchadnezzar’s astrologers complained to him that there were some Jews he had set over the affairs of Babylon, who refused to comply with his decree. They didn’t serve his gods, and neither did they bow down to his golden statue. King Nebuchadnezzar was livid. He had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego summoned and interrogated them. It was true! They indeed refused to bow down to the golden effigy he had fashioned. He threatened to throw them alive into a blazing furnace if they didn’t do as he had decreed. They still didn’t budge.

“King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve can deliver us from it, and He will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:16-18

Out of his mind with anger, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the furnace be heated up seven times hotter than usual and commanded his fiercest soldiers to tie up the three men and throw them into the furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were bound up and thrown into the blaze. The furnace was so hot that the flames instantly incinerated the soldiers who took the three men there to be thrown in. And firmly bound together, the three men fell in.

After a while, King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and saw the three men unharmed. He was shocked! Moreover, when he looked closely, he could see a fourth man in the fire with them! In disbelief, he checked with his people if that indeed was true.

“Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” Daniel 3:24-25

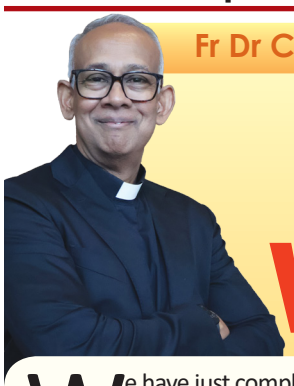
He ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be released from the furnace. The fire had not singed their clothes or a single hair on their head. There wasn’t even the smell of smoke on them.

So it is when we go through the fires of intense trials, impossible situations, depression or trying times. The powerful imagery of what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went through in Daniel 3 assures us that we will never walk through life alone. What Daniel 3 impresses on us is threefold

1. **No exemption, but assured presence.** We are not promised the absence of trials in life. In fact, John 16:33 tells us that we will face them now and then. The promise, however, is that God meets us in that fire. And His presence encourages us that we will not get burnt and that we will emerge unscathed yet refined like pure gold.
2. **Refined, not consumed.** In biblical theology, trial by fire is an often-depicted analogy. (Isaiah 43:2, 1 Peter 1:7) The God who stands with us in the fire ensures that we will not get singed and perish but be refined and shine like pure gold that has proven its worth.
3. **Companionship with the Saviour.** The presence of the ‘fourth man in the fire’ shifts our experience from isolation in tough times to companionship with a loving God. It reframes life's hardest moments from places of perceived abandonment into places of profound divine closeness.

How wonderful and reassuring it is to know that we are not alone in the fiery furnace of our earthly troubles. We worship a loving God who does not preside from a lofty place of judgment or desire to abandon us in trials. Instead, He Himself comes down to us in that furnace and reassures us of His presence, His help, and His comfort. Think about that. What a mighty God we serve. Hallelujah!

Georgina *is a writer, home chef, wife and doggy mama. She is of Indian origin and has lived in Tanzania, Muscat, Mumbai, and is now based in Kuala Lumpur. She is an ex-advertising creative director turned home chef and is the co-owner of Five & Two Fine Foods with her husband, John. In her spare time, she loves to travel, play the keyboard, and craft.*



Fr Dr Clarence Devadass

MPC2026: *Quo Vadis?* Where do we go from here?

We have just completed the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026. For some, it was four days of intense conversations, prayer, listening and discernment. For others, it may have seemed like something happening somewhere else, involving people who were physically present at the Convention. Yet, in reality, we were all present in some way.

We were present when our parishes prayed the MPC2026 Prayer at Mass. We were present when communities took part in the *Perjalanan Salib.* We were present during the Day of Prayer and Fasting. We were present through the Conversations in the Spirit taking place in our parishes, communities and dioceses. We were present through our Parish Pastoral Assemblies and the many conversations that preceded the Convention. In one way or another, the Church of Malaysia accompanied the MPC2026.

Now comes the more important question: ***Quo vadis?* Where do we go from here?**

Many will understandably want to know what happened at the MPC2026. What was discussed? What emerged from the conversations? Were decisions made? Will there be new policies? Will there be administrative changes? What will happen to the structures and programmes of our Church?

These are legitimate questions. But perhaps we should be careful not to expect the MPC2026 to provide immediate answers to every question.

Much of the listening at the MPC2026 took place through the synodal method of the Conversation in the Spirit. It was not simply a matter of putting forward proposals, debating them and voting on them. It was an attempt to listen to one another as the Church of Malaysia and, more importantly, to the Spirit. Such listening requires time. The Holy Spirit cannot be told that four days is the deadline for making everything clear!

The conversations, however, did reveal something important. They revealed the concerns, hopes and anxieties of Catholics in Malaysia. Family life, children and young people, the elderly, Catholic education, care for Creation, poverty and those on the margins, the prophetic voice of the Church, interreligious engagement, and the political and social landscape of Malaysia were among the concerns that surfaced.

Behind these concerns lies a deeper question: **What kind of Church do we need to become for the future?**

There was excitement, but there was also unease. There is a genuine concern about whether the Church will remain relevant to the lives of people, especially the younger generations. Will our parishes continue to be places where people encounter Christ? Will our families be supported in living the Gospel? Will our young people find a home in the Church? Will the Church have the courage to speak prophetically when society is struggling with poverty, injustice, division and environmental destruction? Will we be willing to listen to voices that we have sometimes ignored?

These questions cannot be dismissed as merely the concerns of a particular generation or group. They are questions about the future of the Church of Malaysia.

The MPC2026 has given us some indications and insights. But these require deeper reflection and discernment. We should resist the temptation to rush immediately into announcing conclusions simply because we want certainty. At the same time, we must also resist the opposite temptation of allowing the momentum of the MPC2026 to disappear now that the Convention is over.

Too much prayer, preparation, participation, time, energy and resources have gone into this journey for the MPC2026 to become simply another event in the life of the Church.

The Convention must now become a **process of conversion and action.**

While we await whatever decisions, directions or initiatives may eventually emerge from the appropriate ecclesial authorities, there is already much that can be done. We do not have to wait for a circular, a policy document or a new programme before we begin living the spirit of the MPC2026.

A parish can begin by asking its young people what they hope for from the Church and then actually listening to them. A pastoral council can examine whether it is truly a place of discernment or merely a committee that manages parish activities. A family can create more space for prayer and conversation. A Sunday School ministry can ask how it is forming young people not only intellectually but also as compassionate and responsible disciples. A BEC community can reach out to an elderly person who has become isolated. A parish can examine how it welcomes migrants, the poor and those who feel they have no place in the Church. We can all become more conscious of how our daily lives affect or contribute in the care Creation.

These may appear to be small things. But synodality is not built only through major structural decisions. It is built through relationships, participation, listening and concrete acts of communion. These become our mission!

Perhaps the greatest danger now is that we become spectators waiting to see what "the Church" will do after the MPC2026. But **WE ARE THE CHURCH.** The question is not simply, "What will the bishops decide?" The more challenging question is, "What am I prepared to do?"

If the MPC2026 has called us to become a more listening Church, then let us listen better. If it has called us to greater participation, let us make room for others. If it has called us to be a prophetic Church, let us have the courage to speak and act when it is difficult. If it has called us to care for those on the margins, let us ask who is missing from our communities. If it has called us to conversion, let us begin with ourselves.

So, ***Quo vadis?* Where do we go from here?**

We move forward not with all the answers, but with a renewed and greater willingness to listen, discern and act. We move forward with hope, but also with courage. We move forward knowing that the future of the Church cannot be left to a few people or a few structures.

The question before us now is no longer simply what happened at the MPC2026. The real question is: **What will happen because of the MPC2026?** And that answer will probably not be found only in pastoral directives or policies. It will also be found in what each one of us chooses to do next. The MPC2026 has ended. But the journey has not. ***Quo vadis?* Where do we go from here?**

Fr Clarence *serves as the parish priest of the Church of St Anthony and is also the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

The conspiracy of accidents through which God speaks

A woman once shared this story in one of my classes:

She had been raised in a religious home and had been a regular churchgoer. However, during her years at university, her interest and practice in religion had progressively slipped so that, by the time of her graduation, she no longer attended church or prayed much. This indifference to prayer and church-going continued for several years after her graduation. Her story focused on how that changed.

One day, nearly four years after having given up all practice of prayer and church-going, she flew to Colorado to visit her sister and to do some skiing. She arrived on a Saturday evening and the next morning, Sunday, her sister invited her to come to church with her.

She politely refused and went skiing instead.

On her first run down the slope, she hit a tree and broke her leg. Sporting a huge cast, she was released from hospital the following Saturday. The next morning, her sister again asked her to come to church with her. This time ("there wasn't much else to do") she accepted. As chance would have it, it was Good Shepherd Sunday, and as chance (again) would have it, there happened to be a priest visiting from Israel. He could not see her sitting near the back with her leg in a cast, and yet he began his homily this way:

"There's a custom among shepherds in Israel that existed at the time of Jesus and is still sometimes practised today that highlights a hidden aspect of a good shepherd.

Sometimes a shepherd senses that a young lamb is going to be a congenital stray, forever drifting away from the flock. What the shepherd does then is deliberately break one of its legs so that he has to carry it until its leg is healed. By that time, the lamb becomes so attached to the shepherd that it never strays again."

"I may be dense!" concluded this woman, "but, given my broken leg and all this chance coincidence, hearing this awoke something inside me. Fifteen years have passed since then, and I have prayed and gone to church regularly ever since!"

James Mackey once suggested that divine providence is *"a conspiracy of accidents through which God speaks."* What this woman experienced that Sunday was precisely the language of God, divine providence, God speaking to her through a conspiracy of accidents.

Today the concept of divine providence tends to be ignored or misunderstood. Some Christians identify it with an unhealthy fatalism *("If God wants my child to live He will not let it die. We won't take the medical procedure"). Others connect it to an unhealthy theology of God ("God sent AIDS into the world as a punishment for our sexual promiscuity! God sends us natural and personal disasters to bring us back to true values!")*

But these are false concepts of God and of God's providence. God does not start fires, or floods, or wars, or AIDS, or anything else of this nature to smarten us up and bring us back to true values. Nature, chance, human freedom, and human sin bring these things to pass.

However, to say that God does not initiate or cause these things is not the same thing as saying that God does not speak through them. God speaks through chance events, both disastrous and advantageous. Past generations, like my parents' generation, more easily understood this.

For example, my parents were farmers. For them, like for Abraham and Sarah of old, there were no mere accidents; in everything there was always providence and the finger of God. If they had a good crop, God was blessing them. If they had a poor crop, well, they concluded that God wanted them to live on less for a while for some good reason.

And they would always, in the deep parts of their minds and hearts, try to discern that reason.

When Jesus invites us to "read the signs of the times", He is not suggesting an intellectual exercise wherein we try to articulate for ourselves how the cultural, political, social, and religious movements are shaping our times. That could indeed be a good thing, but that's not what Jesus is inviting us to do. Rather, He is inviting us to look at the events in our personal lives and in the life of the world and, as a deep form of prayer, try to discern what the finger of God is writing through those events.

In the conspiracy of accidents that make up our ordinary lives, the finger of God is writing. John of the Cross says that *"the language of God is the experience God writes into our lives."* As a form of prayer, we need to look at the conspiracy of accidents in our lives and ask ourselves: "What is God saying to us in all of this?"

And hopefully it won't take a broken leg for us to get the message.

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,

Imagine your mum or dad asking you to clean your room before you play. You say, "Yes!" but then run off to play and forget all about it. Your brother says, "No, I don't want to!" but later changes his mind, cleans his room, and helps. Who really listened to your parents? The one who actually did what was asked!

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us about a father who asks his two sons to work in his vineyard. The first son says, "No," but later changes his mind and goes. The second son says, "Yes," but never goes. Jesus asks, "Which son did his father's will?" The answer is the first son. Jesus teaches us that our actions are more important than simply saying the right words.

Sometimes we may say "yes" to God, our parents, or our teachers, but then we do not follow through. We may also make mistakes, say "no," or do something wrong. But that is not the end of the story! We can always change our hearts, say sorry, and choose to do what is right. God is happy when we turn back to Him.

This week, let us try to show our "yes" through our actions: help at home, share with others, tell the truth, say sorry when we make a mistake, and include someone who feels left out. We do not have to be perfect. What matters is that we keep choosing to do what is good and follow Jesus with our actions.



Love,
Aunty C

Colour the "YES" Actions

Small choices make a big difference!

Let your actions show God's love!

Colour the pictures that show someone saying YES to God with their actions.
Put a ☆ beside the action you want to practise this week.


Caring for a plant and God's creation


Saying sorry


Praying to God


Sharing a toy


Shouting at someone


Ignoring Mum when she asks for help


Leaving someone out


Helping a younger sibling

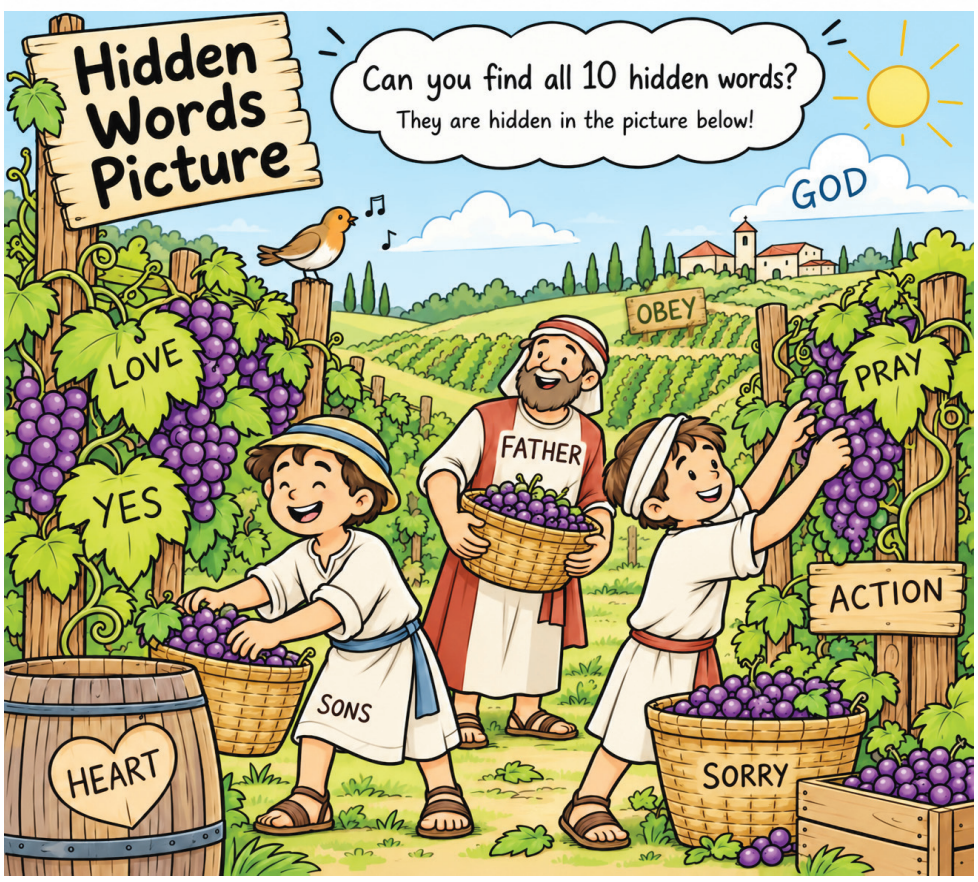


Telling the truth



Making fun of a friend

Hidden Words Picture



Can you find all 7 differences?

Circle them!



YOUTH

YOUNG ADULTS REDISCOVER FAITH AT EMMAUS



Eugene Wong

MELAKA: For 24 single young adults, a four-day journey at Good Shepherd Seminary became an opportunity to pause, reflect and rediscover what it means to walk with Christ and with one another. A young adult prayer group from Melaka recently organised the Emmaus Experience (EE) Programme, bringing together participants aged between 20 and 40 for a four-day, three-night live-in experience centred on Scripture, community and personal sharing.

The participants were accompanied by Fr Martinian Lee as their spiritual director, together with a team of facilitators and an outreach team closely associated with the legacy of the late Fr Ignatius Huan, who developed the original version of the programme.

The Emmaus Experience was first introduced in the Diocese by Fr Ignatius more than 30 years ago. It grew from the well-known Youth Encounter (YE) programme, which he adapted to respond to the particular needs and experiences of single young adults.

Drawing inspiration from the Gospel account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the programme invited participants to reflect on their own journeys of faith. Like the disciples who walked alongside Jesus without recognising Him at first, participants were encouraged to discover how Christ is present in the ordinary moments of their lives.

Throughout the programme, participants took part in a variety of sessions, small-group discussions, Scripture reflections and community activities. There was also plenty of space for fun and fellowship through games, music, prayer, affirmation and simply being present to one another.

These experiences encouraged the young adults to look more deeply at God, themselves, the people around them and the realities of their own lives. More importantly, they were given the space to journey together, listen openly and encounter Christ within a community.

For many participants, the experience offered unexpected moments of insight and renewal.

"I was reminded to not face the 'Goliaths' in my life alone and look for a community where I can communicate openly." ***Raynold Dass***

"Through the programme, I learned to be still and to recognise God's presence in the midst of my struggles and how God calms us so that we can walk through them with Him." ***Justin Chan***

"This was a surprising experience that I did not know I needed. The teachings and the community we built were truly life-changing." ***Ignatius Wong***

"HE opened my eyes to the many ways God had been calling and nudging me to walk with Him. It was a wake-up call that gave me the tools to live my faith more fully in community." ***Rozanne Francis***

"It helped me reconnect with God on a deeply personal level and reminded me that God is constantly running towards us." ***Arnold Monteiro***

"This was an eye-opening experience that challenged me to be more open, vulnerable and trusting within a community of care and prayer. It gave me the courage to face my wounds rather than escape them so that I can truly grow." ***Patrick Wong***

The Emmaus Experience is ultimately a programme of renewal and formation. Rather than establishing an exclusive follow-up programme or structures beyond the experience, participants are encouraged to return to their own parishes and communities where they can continue their journey of faith, growth and service, carrying with them the experiences and graces received along the road to Emmaus.

WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH





KLANG Sometimes, all it takes is a simple gathering to remind us that we are not walking alone. On August 30, 67 single adults from parishes across the Klang District and neighbouring districts, as well as from Ipoh and Melaka, came together at St Anne's, Port Klang, for our very first District Gathering.

The day began with an ice-breaking session, allowing everyone to get to know one another, especially those meeting for the first time. Through fun activities, casual chit-chat, games, and shared laughter, familiar faces soon became new friends. The relaxed and welcoming atmosphere helped everyone feel comfortable, connected, and, most importantly, that they truly belonged to a community.

It was wonderful to see participants coming together from different parishes and places, united by their shared journey as single adults in the Catholic faith. Beyond the games, conversations and laughter, the gathering was a beautiful reminder that none of us are meant to be on this journey alone. We are here to lean on, encourage, and uplift one another as we grow closer to Christ.

We were also truly blessed to have Fr Gregory Chan, Fr Gnana Selvam Berentis, Fr David Arulanantham and Fr Andrew Kooi join us. Their presence was a heartening reminder of the Church's ongoing care, guidance, and support for the single adult community.

As the very first District Gathering for the Single Adult Ministry, this was a special milestone. We are deeply grateful to God for bringing all of us together in such unity and joy. The gathering not only provided an opportunity for fellowship and friendship, but also strengthened our sense of belonging, unity, and community among single adults from different parishes and districts.

We are especially grateful to those who travelled from far to join us for this special occasion. Their presence made the gathering even more meaningful and showed that our journey of faith and friendship can reach beyond parish and district boundaries.

Overall, it was a memorable and meaningful occasion. We are grateful to everyone who attended and contributed towards making the gathering such a joyful and enriching experience.

May this be the beginning of many more opportunities for fellowship, friendship and spiritual growth as we continue to journey together as one community in Christ.

Andrea Vanessa Pinto





A CHOICE THAT OPENS HEARTS

RAWANG: What happens when single adults step away from the busyness of daily life and give themselves time to pause, listen and look honestly at their relationships with themselves, others and God?

For 32 participants aged between 24 and 40, the answer unfolded during English CHOICE Weekend 110 (CEKL 110), held recently at the Malaysia Bible Seminary in Rawang.

CHOICE is a ministry for single working adults that offers participants space to slow down, open their hearts, and view their lives and faith from fresh perspectives.

Throughout the weekend, they reflected on different aspects of their lives and shared their experiences. In a world where conversations often remain on the surface, the sessions encouraged them to speak honestly, listen attentively, and recognise that they were not alone in the struggles and questions they carried.

The openness that gradually developed among the participants gave the weekend much of its meaning. Those who arrived as strangers slowly became friends, while introductions and casual conversations gave way to deeper sharing.

For some, it was the first time they had met others who could relate to their experiences as single adults. For others, it was an opportunity to move beyond their usual social circles and connect with people from different backgrounds.

Beneath the conversations and emerging friendships lay a deeper invitation — to encounter God.

The weekend encouraged participants to look beyond their responsibilities, expectations and uncertainties and recognise God's presence within their own stories.

Gracianne Poorani Bosco from the Church of the Visitation, Seremban, said CHOICE came at a particularly vulnerable moment in her life.

"CHOICE happened at the perfect time for me. Everything fell into place, and it was all God," she said.

Although she had long wanted to attend after hearing about her brother's experience, receiving a job rejection letter shortly before the weekend left her feeling unprepared and uncertain about participating.

She considered withdrawing, but a fellow CHOICE participant encouraged her to attend with an open heart.

"I lowered my expectations, and I was so happy when I left on Sunday. The same content was presented to all 32 participants, yet each of us could relate to it in such a personal way. God was with us and moving among us throughout the weekend," she said.

Another participant, Charleston Luke Chai, from the Church of our Lady of Lourdes, Klang, attended out of curiosity after encouragement from friends who had previously taken part.

"I met new friends and experienced the warmth and sense of community that comes with being part of the Catholic Church," he said.

He described CHOICE as an experience that offered fresh perspectives, meaningful friendships, and deeper matters to reflect upon as he continued discerning his path in life.

"I am grateful that I decided to attend with an open mind," he added.

An encounter with God does not always arrive through a dramatic experience. Sometimes, it happens quietly — in an honest conversation, another person's story, a moment of reflection, or the sudden recognition that God has been present all along.

CEKL 110 reminded participants that faith is not meant to be lived in isolation. God often reaches people through those He places in their lives. Through friendship, attentive listening and sincere sharing, they discovered that their stories mattered and that they did not have to journey alone.

The three-day programme became a journey of encounter and reconciliation — with God, with themselves and with others.

As the participants returned to their daily routines, they carried with them the hope that the friendships formed would continue, the insights gained would bear fruit and their encounter with God would strengthen them for the journeys ahead.

CHOICE does not promise that every question will be answered within one weekend. Its invitation is simpler but no less demanding: to stop, listen and open one's heart — and then make the choice to let God lead the next step. **Melissa Chiew & Reuben Ravi**

HadiratMu; Kerinduan Hatiku

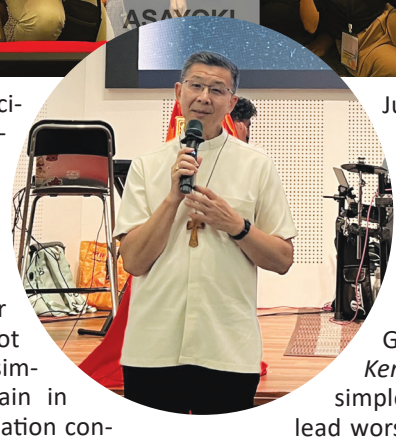
KUALA LUMPUR: On August 8, young people from campuses and parishes gathered for *HadiratMu, Kerinduan Hatiku,* organised by the Archdiocesan Single Adults and Youth Office Kuala Lumpur (ASAYO Kuala Lumpur) in collaboration with ABLAZE Ministry. The day of prayer, formation, and encounter was held at Auditorium Cahayasuara as part of *Tools for Ministry for Young People*, a continuing formation series that equips young leaders with practical skills, spiritual formation and pastoral competence for ministry.

The day opened with W*hat is Praise & Worship?* — exploring praise and worship through the Psalms and moving beyond music to the deeper posture of the heart. Participants then took time to reflect and pray with what they had received.

Following lunch, participants explored the role of worship leaders and musicians through an interactive workshop and Q&A. Participants unpacked common assumptions about praise and worship ministry, looking beyond musical ability to the heart, posture and responsibility behind the role.

The gathering then moved from a time of learning to a time of Ministering and Encounter. After a short breaking of the Word, participants reflected on Exodus 3:1–5, where Moses is invited to remove his sandals as he stands on holy ground.





The passage invited participants to set aside distractions and enter prayer with greater awareness of God's presence.

The hall then grew still as the participants entered into a time of prayer and worship, invited not to perform or lead, but simply to receive and remain in God's presence. The formation concluded with a prayer led by Archbishop Julian Leow, followed by his blessing over those present.

From asking what worship means, to examining the heart of the worshipper, to finally standing before God in prayer, *HadiratMu, Kerinduan Hatiku* offered a simple reminder: before we lead worship, we must first learn to be present. **ASAYO KL**

WYD Seoul 2027

MANILA: Organisers of World Youth Day (WYD) Seoul 2027 are calling on Asian digital missionaries to extend the event's message to millions of young people unable to attend the August 3-8, 2027 gathering in South Korea due to financial, geographical, or structural barriers.



Speaking at the First Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly in Metro Manila, Stephanie Sun, *pic*, global communications lead for the organising committee, emphasised that local digital missionaries provide authentic "witness" rather than basic "reach." While livestreams transmit content broadly, local evangelists can engage struggling youth, answer questions in native languages, and adapt messages to their specific parish realities.



Key Aspects of the WYD Seoul 2027 Vision:

Theme and Context: Centered on "Take courage, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33), the Seoul gathering focuses on seeking truth, practicing love, and building peace — a message of heightened significance in formally divided Korea. This will be the first WYD held in a non-Christian majority country and the second in Asia since Manila hosted in 1995.

Co-Creation: Organisers urge digital creators to actively shape communications, identify trusted local voices, and co-produce tailored content rather than passively distributing materials from Seoul. Online collaboration meetings will begin in early 2027.

Dedicated Programming: Continuing momentum from Lisbon 2023 and the 2025 Rome Jubilee, Seoul 2027 will feature a dedicated festival and gathering for Catholic influencers during WYD week. Registration opens in October 2026.

Proactive Outreach: Mirroring the physical WYD Cross and icon traveling across Asia since 2024, the digital initiative aims to actively meet young people where they are instead of waiting for pilgrims to travel to South Korea.

By leveraging local digital voices, WYD organisers aim to ensure that youth across Asia can experience and participate in the gathering from home.

A priest who made room for people



Redemptorist Fr Simon Pereira (Novena Church)

SINGAPORE: The tributes following the death of Fr Simon Pereira, CSsR, tell a story larger than his years of priestly service. They speak of a priest remembered for his direct preaching, humour, warmth and ability to meet people where they were.

At his Funeral Mass at the Church of St Alphonsus, commonly known as Novena Church, on September 17, the Church gathered to give thanks for a priest whose ministry had touched generations of Catholics in Singapore and beyond.

Fr Simon returned to the Lord on September 13 at the age of 78. He had lived 55 years as a professed Redemptorist and 49 years as a priest.

Born in 1948, he was ordained a priest in 1977. He served as rector and assistant priest of the Church of St Alphonsus and later as rector of the Redemptorist Seminary in Singapore. He was also involved in charismatic ministry, retreats and healing Masses.

His vocation story began with an encounter with the Gospel. According to an account of his vocation, he arrived late for Mass one day carrying a football when he heard Jesus' question to Peter: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" The question eventually led him towards the Redemptorists and priesthood.

His ministry with young people began soon after his ordination, when about 10 young people gathered with him on Saturday evenings in the backyard of Novena Church. What began with conversation and jokes eventually became the Vine and Branches youth group.

In 2007, he brought 60 young people to Pattaya, Thailand, where they served at an orphanage, cared for abandoned babies and encountered children living on the streets.

His ministry extended beyond Singapore. In 2019, he preached the annual clergy retreat for the Diocese of Loikaw in Myanmar, reflecting on priestly vocation and the call to be good shepherds. In Malaysia, he preached at parish celebrations in Ipoh and took part in the Asian Apostolic Congress on Mercy in Penang, where he shared experiences of reaching out to people in prisons, hospitals, pubs and on the streets. Mercy was truly the heart of his ministry.

His homilies often connected the Gospel with ordinary struggles such as fear, forgiveness, suffering and the desire to return to God. Many remain preserved in Novena Church's online archive, including a 2024 reflection on humility and reconciliation.

He also left behind *Never a Dull Moment with God*, a collection of personal stories reflecting on God's love, forgiveness and guidance.

Following his death, stories and memories shared by those who encountered him throughout his ministry have reflected the breadth of his influence.

The tributes following his death point to something that cannot be measured by years of service or positions held. They speak of the people he met, the young people he accompanied, the priests he encouraged and the countless others who encountered the Gospel through his preaching.

His voice may now be silent, but his stories, preaching and the lives he touched remain. May he rest in the peace of Christ, whom he served faithfully throughout his priesthood.

MEMORIAM

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



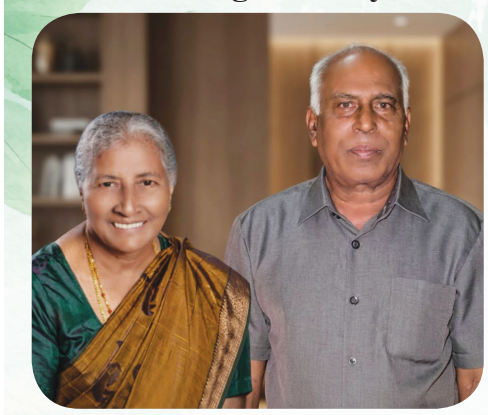
1st Year Anniversary
In Loving Memory of
DAVID ANAND PILLAI

From the Lord:
19-5-1972
To the Lord:
25-9-2025

We missed You so much...
Softly out of the shadows, there came a gentle call.
You took the hand God offered you
and quietly left us all.
And although we cannot hold you,
we will never let you go,
because in our hearts, you will live forever,
because we loved you so.

Missing You Tremendously,
Shevonne, Tristen & Ashten.

In Loving Memory of



Angeline David nee Rukmani Naidu
Departed: September 30, 2016

David Joseph
Departed: February 27, 2007

These are faces
before us, voices
we'd love to hear.
Smiles we will always
remember of
Amamma and Thatha
we love so dear.
We hold you close
within our hearts,
There you will always
remain, To walk with us
throughout our lives,
Until we meet again.

Always remembered and dearly loved by
Dr Geraldine Ashwini, Sarah Kamini, Marcella Sangini and loved ones.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
NOEL SAGAYARAJAH



5 January 1957 – 25 March 2026

Six months have passed since you left us and went home to the Lord, but not a day goes by that we don't think of you.
Your love, your kindness and the memories we shared forever remain in our hearts.
We miss you more than words can say, and we carry you with us every day. Though we cannot see you, we feel your love with us everyday.
May you rest peacefully in God's loving arms, until we meet again.
Forever loved. Forever missed. Forever in our hearts.

Eternal rest grant unto Noel Sagayarajah, O Lord,
And let your perpetual light shine upon him.
May his soul rest in peace.
Amen.



1st Year Anniversary
In Loving Memory of
JOHN SANTNASAMY SAVARIMUTHU

A faithful servant of the Lord, called home on the 23rd September 2025

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, Whoever believes in Me, will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.
John 11:25-26

IN GOD'S CARE,
FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord
Let your perpetual light shine upon him.
May his soul rest in peace. Amen

21st Year Memorial



STELLUS ALMEIDA
(04-02-1933 to 30-09-2005)

Those we love don't go away, They walk beside us everyday. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear.

Fondly cherished by your wife Freeda, your children and their spouses, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives and friends.

1st Anniversary



FRANCIS KOH HONG SENG
15th December 1935 – 2nd October 2026

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May his soul rest in peace.

Deeply missed by children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

2nd Anniversary
Forever in our hearts



Joseph Iruthayam
2.11.1958 - 28.9.2024

Two years ago, we lost your presence, but we never lost your place in our hearts. Life has continued, but a part of it will always feel different without you.

Forever loved.
Forever missed.
Forever in our hearts.

In Loving Memory of



STEVE AND JUANITA

From the Lord:
18 August 1920
To the Lord:
3 September 2004

From the Lord:
12 June 1930
To the Lord:
25 October 2003

We Love and Miss you dearly.
Papa and Mummy.

NOTICE

The cost for placing a memoriam is RM150 per column.

For enquiries, please contact us:

Tel/WhatApp:
03-2026 8291

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

TRINITY FUNERAL SERVICES
SDN BHD 1027544-D



24 HOURS

FOR FREE AND NO OBLIGATION CONSULTATION, PLEASE CALL

Jude Anthony
019-241 5215 or
016-275 5215

016-655 2195
trinityfuneralservices3@gmail.com

No 48, Jln Anggerik Doritis 31/128, Kota Kemuning, Section 31, 40460, Shah Alam, Selangor

REST IN PEACE

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

FOR THE CARE OF WATER
We pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

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

ISSN 1394 - 3294
9 771394 329008
September 27, 2026

Every migrant child possesses infinite dignity

VATICAN: Migrant and refugee children must never be reduced to statistics or treated as problems to be managed, Pope Leo XIV said, calling on individuals, Christian communities, faith groups and governments to protect every displaced child's dignity and rights.

In his message for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, observed on September 27, the Pope focused on the theme, *Even Just One of These Children*, inspired by Christ's words: "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me."

The theme draws attention to children and adolescents forced to leave their homelands because of war, poverty, violence, environmental disasters and other tragedies.

Pope Leo described minors as the most vulnerable people within global migration movements. Many have lost parents, siblings and friends, witnessed acts of violence or endured long separations from their families.

Some travel with their parents under dangerous and traumatic conditions, while others are separated from them through repatriation. Along migration routes, children also face death, trafficking, exploitation, sexual violence, forced marriage and recruitment into armed conflicts.

Each child, however, has a face, a name and a unique story.

"It is not a question of numbers or statistics. The Gospel invites us not to calculate: even one," the Pope said.

Every child possesses infinite dignity because each is created in the image and likeness of God. Welcoming a migrant child is therefore both an act of humanity and an encounter with Christ, who said: "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me."

Pope Leo warned that migrant children are easily overlooked because they often lack adults able to defend and support them. He called for efforts to address the conditions compelling families to flee, while ensuring protection in countries of transit and destination.

The suffering of displaced children, he said, is a cry that rises to God and appeals directly to the human conscience. Christians cannot remain indifferent or grow accustomed to seeing such suffering.

Amid these painful realities, the Pope pointed to signs of hope: families opening their homes, educators serving in reception centres, and volunteers and humanitarian workers caring for the unseen wounds carried by displaced children.

Through their service, they show that love can overcome indifference.

The Pope said responsibility begins at the personal level. Each person must be willing to listen to a child's story, fears and dreams, and resist the detachment that turns a human life into an impersonal figure.

Before being labelled a "migrant", each child is a person whose fundamental rights must be protected. These include the rights to life, education and conditions that support physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

For the Church, welcome must become a consistent pastoral practice rather than an abstract ideal or a responsibility delegated only to specialised organisations.

Pope Leo called on Christian communities to regard displaced children as their own sons and daughters. Refugees and migrants should be welcomed as full members of the ecclesial family and supported through educational and spiritual accompaniment suited to their needs.

He also urged parishes to address the loneliness, isolation and rejection experienced by the children of migrants. Opportunities should be created for local and migrant young people to meet, support one another and build relationships founded on respect, solidarity and friendship.

The protection of children also provides common ground for interreligious cooperation, the Pope said. A child's vulnerability crosses religious boundaries and places a shared humanitarian and spiritual responsibility upon all believers.

Faith communities can work together to create safe spaces where children are respected and valued in their cultural identities. Such cooperation can also help prevent vulnerable young people from being drawn towards extremist groups.

Pope Leo called on civil institutions to place the best interests of every child at the centre of migration policies. Governments and private institutions must adopt effective legal protections, promote family reunification and prevent the trauma caused by separating children from their parents.

He urged a change in perspective, shifting public debate away from simply managing migration towards protecting human rights and providing genuine opportunities for welcome and integration.

The message presents a direct challenge to indifference. The plight of millions can appear overwhelming, tempting people to believe that their actions will make little difference. Yet the Gospel begins with the child standing before us — the one life that can be protected, the one story that can be heard and the one family that can be welcomed.

Pope Leo entrusted migrant and refugee children to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, with St Joseph and the Child Jesus, experienced violence and exile in Egypt.

He prayed that Mary would accompany displaced children and help Christian communities become living and credible signs of the Gospel — communities in which even one vulnerable child is recognised, welcomed and loved.

To read the full message go to: ***https://sl1nk.com/58k6aur***





Pope Leo XIV greets migrants at the "Las Raíces" migrant centre in San Cristobal de La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, June 12, 2026, during his apostolic journey to Spain. (OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters)



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